ON THIS MONTH'S DEMO CD

CD CONTENT CORRECT AT THE TIME GOING TO PRESS

10 ESSENTIAL PLAYSTATION DEMOS

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MEGAMAN LEGENDS • MARVEL SUPER HEROES VS. STREETFIGHTER • BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE • MEGAMAN X4 • R-TYPES

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STATION

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GTA MISSION PACK 1

LONDON 1969

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PLAYSTATION 2

Exclusive pictures of Sony's new console in action – plus interviews with the developers

ENGLAND Vs SWEDEN TICKETS!

WIN!

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

UM JAMMER LAMMY
BLOODY ROAR 2
FINAL FANTASY VIII
RIDGE RACER TYPE 4
WARZONE 2100
KKND KROSSFIRE
TANK RACER
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RAPIDE

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Volume 1 Issue 8

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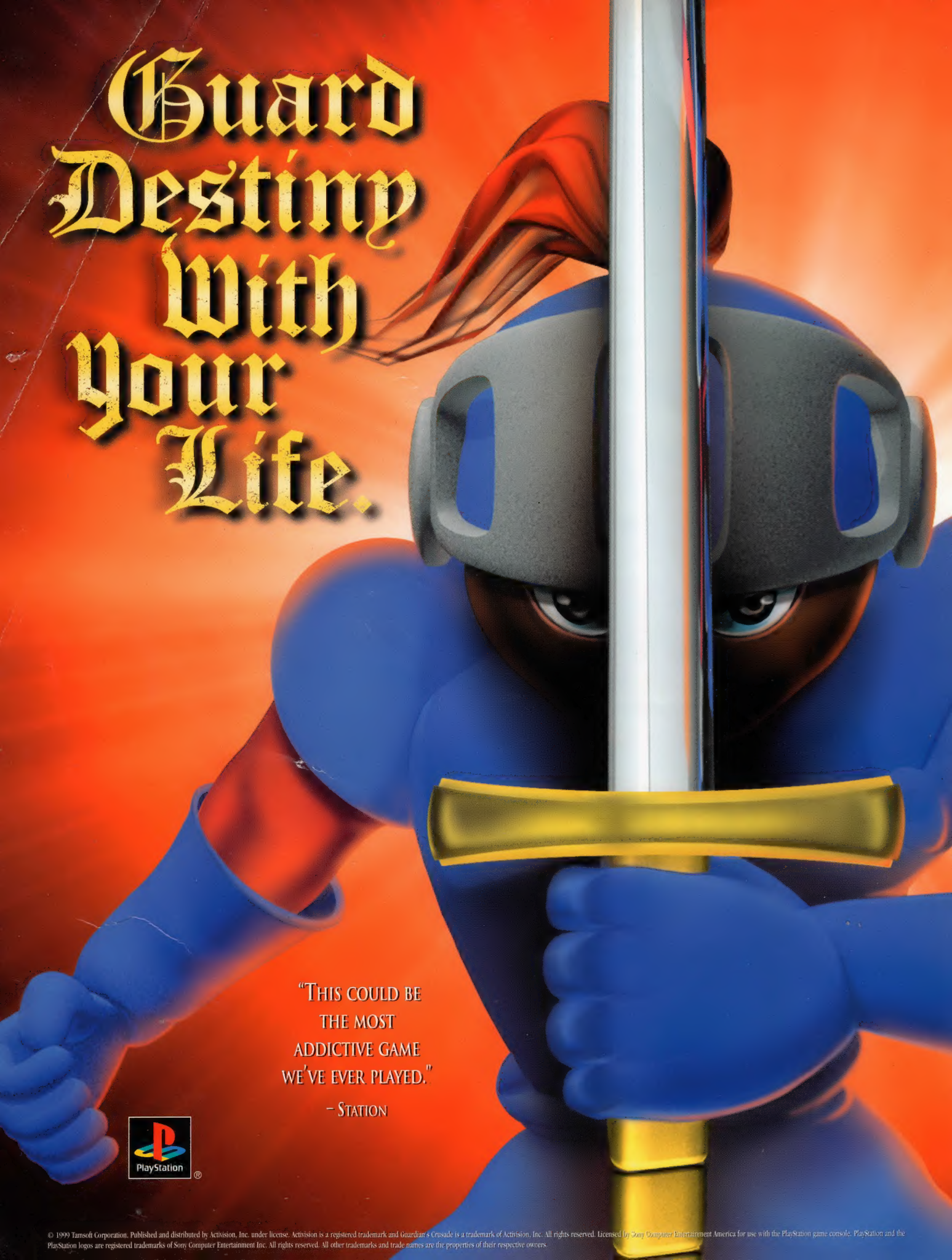
COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO: RIDGE RACERTYPE 4 AND ROLLCAGE



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8 GEX ON A STICK

Summer draws near, meaning many things: balmy evenings with a few beers, women in light summer clothing and a stack of game releases that raise the ethical question 'games or sunshine?'. This question has been pondered by many sagacious minds over the generations: Socrates, Plato, Hegel, Sartre – all have wondered if going out into the summer day is, in fact, really worth the effort when so many exalted games yearn to be played.

STATION is here to help in your incertitude. Slap the sleek black disc into the PlayStation, fire it up and play our range of demos that we've toiled and bled to get to you. Only from playing will the answer be known. We care at STATION. We really do. Just make sure that beer never loses out to games. We'd have to have words with you if that happened.

PLAYABLE

- GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO
- UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
- ELIMINATOR • RETRO FORCE
- TOMB RAIDER II (PLATINUM)

ROLLING VIDEO

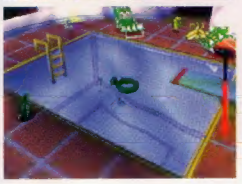
- R-TYPES
- BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE
- MEGAMAN LEGENDS
- MARVEL SUPER HEROES VS STREET FIGHTER
- MEGAMAN X4

GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

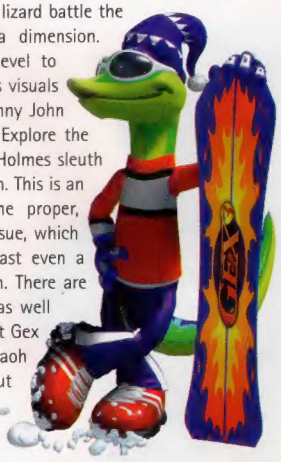
PLAYABLE

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive

GAME TYPE: 3D Platformer



As games characters go, Gex has had something of a chequered history. The world instantly embraced a corpulent plumber with a penchant for 'mushrooms' and a neon-blue hedgehog. They were somewhat cooler towards Gex, despite his prodigiously long tongue and wisecracks. The first Gex game, debuting on the now extinct 3DO, was a banal platformer made infuriating by a nasal American making one-liners. Then Gex hit 3D and the phenomenon was born. *Enter the Gecko* received rave reviews via the immersive 3D interface and suave witticism from the king of smooth, Leslie Phillips. Gex returns in his latest game, Deep Cover Gecko, seeing the eponymous lizard battle the perfidious Rez in the media dimension. We've given you an entire level to explore, chocka with gorgeous visuals and wisecracks, voiced by Danny John Jules, the Cat in *Red Dwarf*. Explore the level, marvel at the Sherlock Holmes sleuth outfit and fulfil the tasks given. This is an accurate taster of the game proper, received warmly in our last issue, which offers enough challenge to last even a dedicated player a millennium. There are hidden levels and characters as well as many humorous outfits that Gex can assume, such as a pharaoh and a Roman warrior. Check out this *Mario* beater for yourself and see what we mean.



CONTROLS

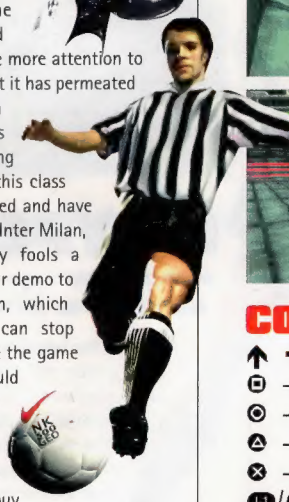
↑ → ↓ ← – Move
⊗ – Jump
⊙ – Tail Whip
△ – Look
○ – Tongue
L1/R1 – Rotate view

PLAYABLE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

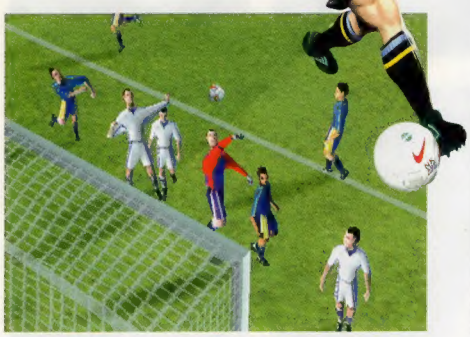
PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive
GAME TYPE: Football Sim

Ahh, football. Men in shorts kicking a pigs bladder between two posts. such a simple concept that has enriched and ruined our lives simultaneously. The exhilaration of seeing your team score from outside the box in extra time, the commiseration of an irate girlfriend bemoaning the fact they you devote more attention to your club than her. Not only that, but it has permeated into every facet of our life, and even the humble videogame is contaminated. Which is a good thing as it means that we can give you this class demo. You play as Manchester United and have the opportunity to compete against Inter Milan, hopefully teaching those smarmy fools a lesson. You'll have five minutes in our demo to teach them pain and humiliation, which should be enough time if you can stop marvelling at the graphics. We gave the game 90% in out last issue and you should be able to discern why. There are enough options available to appease statistic fanatics, allowing you to tweak any variable you desire. Play the demo, enjoy and buy the game. It's that simple.



CONTROLS

↑ → ↓ ← – Move Player
⊗ – Pass/Slide tackle
□ – Header/Long ball
○ – Shoot/Volley
△ – Through ball
L1 – Speed
R1 – Trick Move
R2 – Cross
L2 – Kick



PLAYABLE

ELIMINATOR

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GAME TYPE: Future Sport

Why is it that in games all future sports take place in a post-apocalyptic wasteland of TS Eliot-style desolation? Not only that, but in these games the sole way that humanity can begin to reconstitute itself is via violent and accelerated ultra-sports in which the body count is as important the game itself. Eliminator supposes the same future, in which clambering into a high-velocity vehicle and shooting things is the way to progress. Play the demo yourself and discover the joys of speed and manoeuvring whilst attacking anything that moves. The expected weapon upgrades litter the arena for your delectation, aiding the path of destruction. Games like this are ideal for those who have tired of *WipEout* and feel the burning urge for rapid action. Try it out and draw your own conclusions.

CONTROLS

↑ → ↓ ← – Move ship/Camera
□ – Fire Primary weapon
○ – Fire secondary Weapon
△ – Flip Craft
⊗ – Accelerate
L1/R1 – Strafe
L2/R2 – Cycle Weapons

PLAYABLE

RETRO FORCE

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GAME TYPE: Shoot 'em-up

Ever since Neanderthal man hurled sticks at the moon we have had a perverse interest in shooting things. There are precious few items that are safe from the reaches of the gun, and even those items probably get torched by sadistic pyromaniacs. This probably goes a long way to explain the success of *Space Invaders*. When this innovative game was released, it allowed us to vent our xenophobia and gun-toting frenzy, even if was via the medium of blocky graphics, a pea shooter gun and aliens that juddered from side to side like a reject from the breakdancing society.

Retro Force stands firmly on its laurels and wants to give the humble player a satisfying experience of blasting action. As the title implies, it is derivative of the 'Old-Skool' arcade style of vertical shoot 'em-up that still holds a sacred place in the hearts of the elder gamer. As for playing the demo itself, the idea is purity itself: shoot it or pick it up, rather like a night out in some dubious London clubs. You'll have to disengage your brain but the hectic action will compensate for the lack of cerebral stimulation.

CONTROLS

↑ → ↓ ← – Move Craft
⊗ – Fire primary
○ – Bomb
□ – Special weapon
△ – Smart bomb
R1/R2 – Cycle weapons
L1/L2 – Climb/Dive

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STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

From the Alpha branch of the Street Fighter tree, 'Street Fighter Alpha 3' has several completely new features as well as tweaked existing ones. Customise your favourite characters in World Tour mode, possibly the best new touch of the game. Here you can travel the world dishing out excessive physicality in any country that can offer an opponent. Includes all the characters from the Street Fighter series plus new, hidden characters to battle it out against some of the most detailed backdrops to grace the fighting scene.

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GTA London Mission Pack

The most dangerous game of the nineties is back. Set in 1969, with a new breed of sharp dressing, gun-wielding gentlemen set to make their mark on the city. Recreating the original sounds with the funkiest music ever, 32 vicious missions, 20 classic cars, four dangerously insane villains and of course, the boys from Scotland Yard. 'Grand Theft Auto London' is 1969!

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PLAYABLE

TOMB RAIDER II (PLATINUM)

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive

GAME TYPE: 3D Action/Adventure

It is a universal truism that Lara is big. Many may assume that to be a gratuitous breast joke, but we here at STATION are above that puerile mirth and refuse to make tits of ourselves with cheap shag-gags. Lara is big apropos her phenomenal success, making her the first videogame character to infiltrate the media as a being in her own right and breaking from the preserve of sweaty, maladjusted teenage boys who play the game with one hand. *Tomb Raider* is selling well on Platinum and the release of *Tomb Raider III* has made the second game in the series somewhat redundant, sandwiched between the other two. Eidos, in an act of genius, have decided to release Tomb Raider II for a princely £20. Some people out there may never have played Tomb Raider II; new PlayStation owners or the terminally slow. We give you the chance to discover the magic of Lara in the entire Great Wall level. All the compelling features are there with some graphical improvements from the antecedent *Tomb Raider*, such as smoother Lara animation and real-time light sourcing. Sceptics have claimed that Tomb Raider II detracts from the ethos of the original by giving gunplay more prominence and reducing the aspect of exploration. Whatever view you adhere to, it's a superb game and one that necessitates purchase. After you've enjoyed our demo, naturally...

CONTROLS

↑ → ↓ ← – Move Lara

⊗ – Action

○ – Jump

△ – Weapon

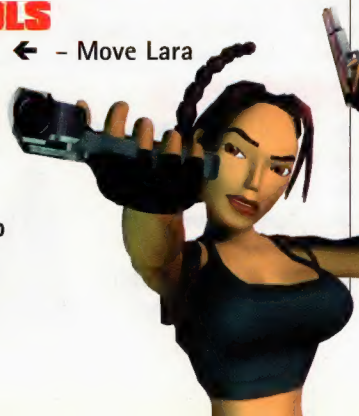
□ – Roll

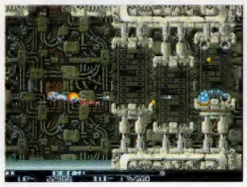
R1 – Walk

R2 – Sidestep

L1 – Look

L2 – Flare





R-TYPES

ROLLING VIDEO

PUBLISHER: Virgin

GAME TYPE: 3D Shoot 'em-up

In the beginning was *R-Type* and it was good. The people did bow down before the gameplay in reverence. Irem, they who are and who created the holiness of *R-Type* did hear the gnashing and wailing of the chosen people and Irem did give them *R-Type 2*. There was much rejoicing and feasting. Many did love *R-Type* due to the immensity of the bosses and the weapons. Lo, *R-Type* was not an easy game and often did the people vent angst at the difficulty curve. Irem knew the need of the people for a home conversion and have yea given R-Types unto the PlayStation for all to enjoy. R-Types is a compilation of the original *R-Type* and *R-Type 2*, both games of enormous influence. They may seem pallid and dull by modern standards, but if you play the game in context all will become clear. our rolling demo gives a mere taste of the innovations that *R-Type* gave the shoot 'em-up.

ROLLING VIDEO

BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE

PUBLISHER: Virgin
GAME TYPE: Racing Sim

Racing games, racing games, there are literally thousands of them. Arcade racers, simulations, formula one – I want something different! I want cartoon qualities! I want sweetness! I want fluffy things! Watch, my friends, as my bizarre dream comes true...

Sit in your super soft chair and watch the rolling demo of this new speedy racer, which is as high on the cuteness scale as it is possible to be, without being fully wrapped in sugar syrup. The legendary videogame character Bomberman is usually found running around mazes setting traps for his evil enemies, but at the weekend he likes nothing more than to charge big furry green bunnies around race tracks with his bombadier buddies. See him in action as he enjoys high-octane thrills and spills. Seriously colourful eye candy of the highest order, what more can you ask for?

ROLLING VIDEO

MARVEL SUPER HEROES VS STREET FIGHTER

PUBLISHER: Virgin
GAME TYPE: Beat 'em-up

Ah, the life of the media junky. Long days spent in the local arcade plunging endless ten pences into the latest *Street Fighter* adventure as you kick and punch to victory. Then, off to the comic store to check out the latest adventures of Spiderman and his super hero chums. Now, imagine that these two delightful activities that have sucked up so much of our young lives could somehow be melded together. Imagine no more my friends, for the glorious genius' at Capcom have now produced this nifty new beat 'em-up to quench our violent thirsts. Load the rolling demo and fight your way to happiness.

MEGAMAN LEGENDS

ROLLING VIDEO

PUBLISHER: Virgin
GAME TYPE: RPG

He's back, he's still the small blue hero with the funky outfit that we all love, but now he is bigger and better as he is thrust into the high tech world of late '90s gaming. No longer restricted by the rusty shackles of the 2D left to right jumpy jumpy, get to the end of the level tomfoolery of his past outings, he now lives in a lovely flowing 3D world with full-on 360° movement. See the little fella in action in our rolling demo and remember just why he has been top of the platform pops for so many years. Go, Megaman, go!

MEGAMAN X4

ROLLING VIDEO

PUBLISHER: Virgin
GAME TYPE: Platformer

Okay, Okay, I can hear the traditionalists moaning, having seen our lovely demo of *Megaman Legends*. 'We like 2D', they shout in unison, and a huge chorus of '80s children screams 'Give us old Megaman'. So, the good news my antiquated friends is that you can now bask in the original lo-fi glory of Megaman X4 in this rolling demo. He runs, he jumps, he shoots things and never once does he lose that lovely little smile, even when huge monsters are vying to kick his Megaman behind. Bask in the warming glow of nostalgia coming from this platform romp. Oh yes.

HMV
thechallenge continues...

SYPHON FILTER

Best described as a hybrid mixture of 'Metal Gear Solid' and 'Goldeneye', this gaming interpretation of the espionage genre is more than a worthy contender. With the help of Government forces you must overcome a gang of terrorists who have gained possession of a deadly virus. 'Syphon Filter' is packed with exhilarating gameplay and technically engrossing puzzles which will keep any gamer fully engrossed and transfixed throughout.

COLOUR DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER

The connoisseur's controller of choice, the best pad in the business is back and this time in a variety of exciting colours. With new Island Blue, Crystal, Diamond Black and Emerald Green to choose from, your gaming experience will enter colourful new heights.

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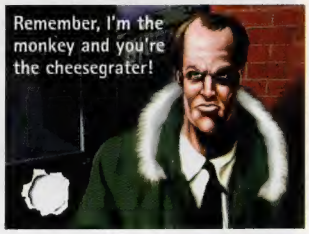
STATION Contents May 1999

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

GTA LONDON 1969

The irresponsible carjacking game goes all cor blimey guv! Check out our exclusive review on page 12.



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Frankly deranged but fun-strumming follow up to *PaRappa the Rapper.*

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Four-a-side footie in strange locations.

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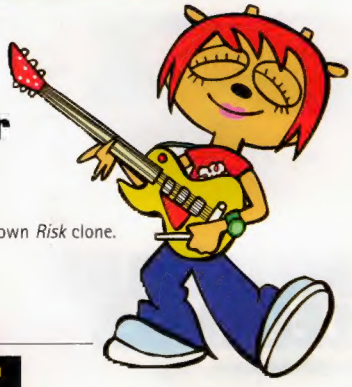
Interesting mangafied *Resident Evil* homage.



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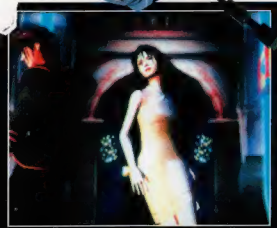

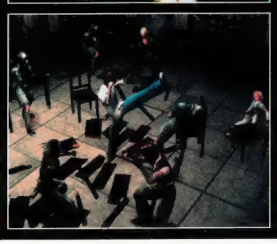

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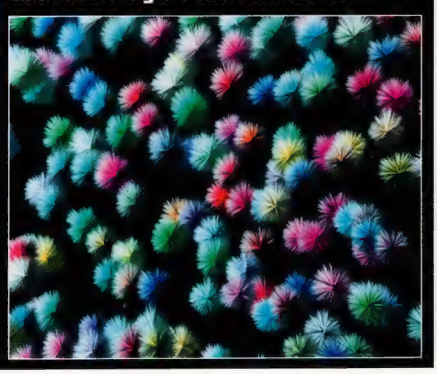

SHUT IT

AND TURN TO PAGE 12, YOU PONCE!

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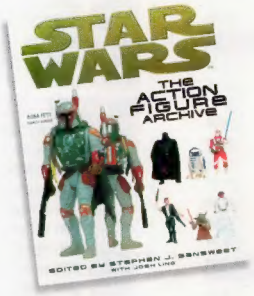

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The explosive Lego man burns rubber on anthropomorphised dinosaurs.

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The creaky old SF characters take on the might of Dr X's Gifted Individuals.

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Airborne future pigs at a knock down price.

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Seminal bladed combat that gives Tekken 3 a serious run for its money.

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Dungeons and Dragons for the year 2000, methinks.

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Legitimised and funky button bashing, popular with girlfriendless otaku.

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THE STATION TEAM

EDITOR	Darren Herridge darren@rapide.co.uk
SUB EDITOR	Adam Oxford
REVIEWS EDITOR	Christian Slater christian@rapide.co.uk
STAFF WRITERS	Nick White Kendall Lacey
DESIGNER	Ant Grace ant@rapide.co.uk
CONTRIBUTORS	Steve Kelly, James Gale
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Steve Michaels
PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS	Brian Garwood Andy Dunn
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION	Liz Charles adprod@rapide.co.uk
PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR	Anna Matheson anna@rapide.co.uk
PAPER CONTROLLER	Karen De La Rue elvira@rapide.co.uk
DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING	Gerard Richardson
SALES EXECUTIVE	Jon Massey ads@rapide.co.uk Tel: 01392 495155 Fax: 01392 433505
SUBS/MAIL ORDER	Lisa Smith subs@rapide.co.uk Telephone: 01392 495155
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	Julia Richardson julia@rapide.co.uk
PUBLISHER	Dave Perry gamesanimal@rapide.co.uk
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	Mark Ayshford ayshie@rapide.co.uk
FINANCIAL DIRECTOR	Jerry Davison
MANAGING DIRECTOR	Mark Smith marksmith@rapide.co.uk

PRINTING
Southern Print [Web Offset] Limited
17-19 Factory Road, Upton Industrial Estate,
Upton, Poole, Dorset, BH16 5SN
Tel: 01202 622226 Fax: 01202 632403

DISTRIBUTION
MMC, Octagon House,
White Heart Meadows, Ripley, Woking,
Surrey, GU12 6HR
Tel: 01483 211222
Fax: 01483 224541

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Rapide Publishing
1 Roman Court,
48 New North Road,
Exeter EX4 4EP
Telephone: 01392 495155
Fax: 01392 491135

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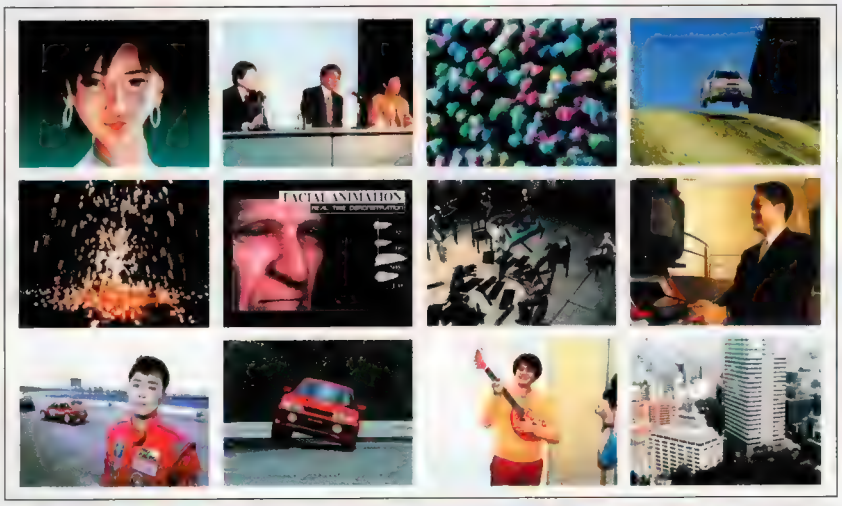
A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

This month sees all three mighty giants of the videogames industry flex their millennium muscles in the direction of an unsuspecting public. Sega, for example, brags of selling the one millionth Dreamcast in Japan – apparently making it the fastest selling console of all time. Our opinion: the technological leap is more of a stumble, and the console will not grab the audience outside of Japan. News across the Internet has spread of Nintendo's new console, the Magic Box. Even though Nintendo has refused to confirm the specification speculation, we at STATION feel it's an unofficial response to Sony's press release revealing the technology behind the next generation PlayStation. STATION were lucky enough to be invited to see the technology in action at Sony's offices in Japan at the beginning of March. The console won't be available over here until Autumn 2000, but we can reliably foresee that Sony will change the face of videogaming forever. If you need convincing, and you have Internet access, log onto GameFan's website (www.gamefan.com) and download the *Tekken* movie. This 5mb nugget shows Jin and Paul exchanging blows while an adrenaline-charged mob shout encouragement. This footage looks like an FMA intro from any triple A title, but it isn't – it's actually in-game graphics. Sony describe it as 'A Glimpse Of The Future', and we at STATION wholly agree; Sega, Nintendo, give it up now!

DaZZa – Editor



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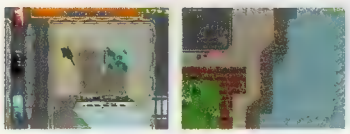
GTA: MISSION PACK 1, LONDON 1969

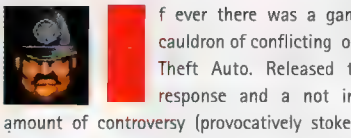
PUBLISHER: Take 2 Interactive **DEVELOPER:** RockStar **RELEASE DATE:** 16th May **GAME TYPE:** Arcade/Driving
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

EXCLUSIVE!

Shut It And Drive, You Slag!

Pedestrians look over your shoulders in fear, 'cos GTA is back and it still hasn't read the Highway bleedin' Code...





FIRST TEN MINUTES

This is where GTA is arguably at its very best, with instantly gratifying action that doesn't actually need any structured gameplay to be enjoyable

COMPETITION

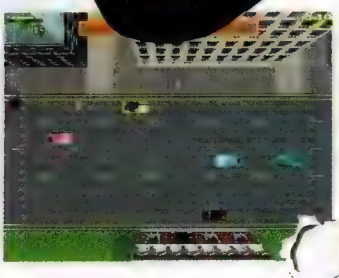
AUTO DESTRUCT
Mission-based future cop EA game similar in tone to *GTA* if not in actual appearance.

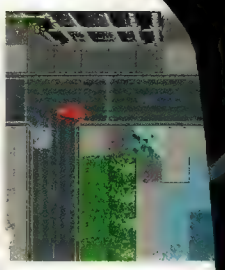
65%

DRIVER
Okay, so it's not out yet, but this getaway game is undeniably *GTA: London*'s kisssing cousin.

N/A

If ever there was a game that stirred up a cauldron of conflicting opinions it was Grand Theft Auto. Released to varied critical response and a not inconsiderable amount of controversy (provocatively stoked by spin doctor to the rich and infamous, PR man Max Clifford) GTA caused significant outrage amongst moral majority types who found the grinningly nihilistic gameplay rather hard to stomach, based as it was on assuming the role of a unapologetic, drug-running, pedestrian mowing-down criminal with no compunctions about sticking two fingers up at society's rules. Youngsters in particular bought it in droves, egged on no doubt by the added naughtiness

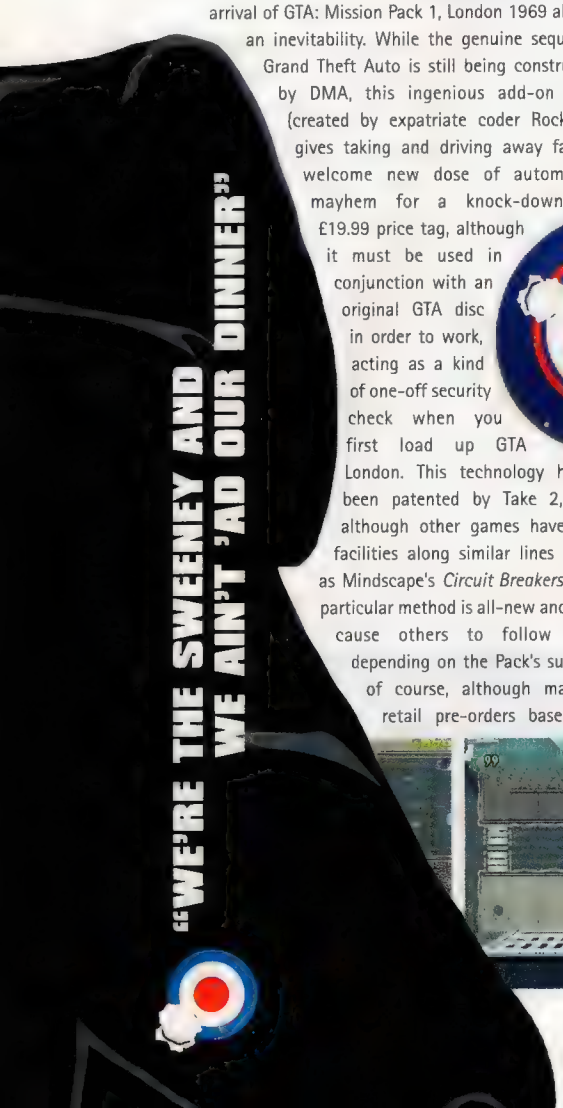




FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Oh dear, a nasty end has befallen our man it seems. He fell down the stairs, your Honour; letting rip with a flamethrower in the middle of a crowded city? Nice one, son!

of getting their hands on a game with an '18' certificate slapped on its cover and behaving like their favourite anti-heroes on *The World's Scariest Police Chases*, albeit vicariously through the PSX.

The now-platinum GTA is still riding freakishly high in the all format charts (last count hanging in at number 8) inferring that the great unwashed public's appetite for this particular brand of bad-boy thrills remains undiminished, and makes the arrival of GTA: Mission Pack 1, London 1969 almost an inevitability. While the genuine sequel to Grand Theft Auto is still being constructed by DMA, this ingenious add-on pack (created by expatriate coder RockStar) gives taking and driving away fans a welcome new dose of automotive mayhem for a knock-down £19.99 price tag, although it must be used in conjunction with an original GTA disc in order to work, acting as a kind of one-off security check when you first load up GTA London. This technology has been patented by Take 2, and although other games have had facilities along similar lines (such as Mindscape's *Circuit Breakers*) this particular method is all-new and may cause others to follow suit, depending on the Pack's success of course, although massive retail pre-orders based on the soaraway commercial performance of the first instalment have virtually guaranteed this already.



Watch It Or You'll Get A Slap, Sunshine

For those that have been living a troglodytic existence for the past year the basic premise of Grand Theft Auto is this: you take the role of a professional comitter of crimes for hire, briefed on whatever dodgy jobs his bosses have going via anonymous public phone boxes. A spot of carjacking is generally next on the agenda, with some hapless motorist getting pulled from their precious vehicle and left with a broken nose while your man speeds off. Being a gangster of course

SLANG BANG

For those not born within the sound of Bow bells, here's a handy glossary of some colloquial London terms that may pop up in the game.

alright/awright (*interrog*) – a greeting literally meaning 'is everything all fine?'. Usually used in the form 'awright mate!'.

banged (up) (*v*) – to be put in prison. eg. 'Did you hear John got banged up for that blag?'.

barney (*n*) – row, violent argument. Origin unknown, poss. from 'Barney Rubble' – rhyming slang for trouble?

bird (*n*)– probably the most common slang term for woman/girl/girlfriend; (*prison slang*) a prison sentence. eg. 'He's doing 'is bird in Holloway'. From the rhyming slang term 'birdlime' meaning 'time'.

blag (*v*) – to commit a robbery; (*n*) a theft.

blinding (*adj*) or blinder (*n*) – something amazing or wonderful. eg. 'We 'ad a right blinding time last night dahn the pub'.

bovver (*n*) – trouble, usually fighting. Also bovver boots (*n*) – large lace-up boots worn by thugs (especially skinheads) and bovver boys (*collect. n*) – boys that cause the bovver mate!

Brahms and Liszt (*adj*) – rhyming slang for 'pissed' (drunk), used in its full form.

brown bread (*adj*) – rhyming slang for 'dead'.

Chelsea Smile (*n*) – the scar remaining after having been cut ear to ear. This term comes from the criminal underworld of the '60s, à la Kray era.

claret (*n*) – blood. eg. 'There was a right ding-dong dahn the boozer last night, claret all over the place!'.

clump (*vt*) – to hit, *usu* a punch. A term often used by a bit of 'rough geezer', ie. 'I'll come over there and clump you if you're not carefull!'.

cop-shop (*n*) – police station

cushty (also kushty) – (*adj*) everything is fine; (*interj*) something has been resolved. From Hindustani 'khush' meaning 'pleasant'.

diamond geezer (*n*) – a good, 'solid' reliable person.

dodgy (*adj*) – dubious or shifty (*qv*). eg. 'He's a bit of a dodgy geezer'.

done over (*v pt*) – beaten up, duffed in (*qv*).

drum (*n*) – a house, home or building *esp* in police and underworld circles. Origin unknown, may come from the Romany drom (*n*) –highway, but possibly a back-formation from drummer (*n*), someone who knocks (drums) on people's doors, either to buy or sell goods or find somewhere to rob.

duck and dive (*vi*) – to hide from trouble, *usu* the police or some dodgy geezers (*qv*).

duff (*vt*) – to hit or generally pulverise, *usu* somebody rather than something. *pt* duffed in/up.

filth (*n*)– the police.

firm (*n*) – a gang of 'dodgy geezers' (*qv*).

geezer (*n*) – very common term for a man. There are many disproved origins of the word. Used both respectfully (ie. 'Awright geezer!') and for a person of unknown name (ie. 'some geezer'); Also bit of a geezer – a bit of a laddish rogue, dodgy geezer – a man of bad or suspect character.

had it away on his toes – to run away quickly, usually after a dodgy (*qv*) act. eg. 'I dunno where John is, 'e must 'ave 'ad it away on his toes'.

half inch (*vt*) – Rhyming slang for pinch (steal).

(a good) hiding (*n*) – to get beaten up. eg. 'If you don't shut it I'll give you a good hiding!'.

inside (*adv*) – in prison. eg. 'I've 'eard Dave's inside again'.

jam jar (*n*) – rhyming slang for car.

leggit (*imperit*) – run away fast. eg. 'Quick, leggit, the law are coming!'.

manor (*n*) – territory, area, turf. *usu* associated with the criminal underground, eg. 'If I see you round my manor again you're dead!'.

motor/motah (*n*) – common working class term for a car.

nick (*n*) – police station, prison. eg. 'He got banged up in the nick for six month'.

scarpa/scarper (*vi usu imperit*) – to run off/leave quickly. From action of Scapa Flow.

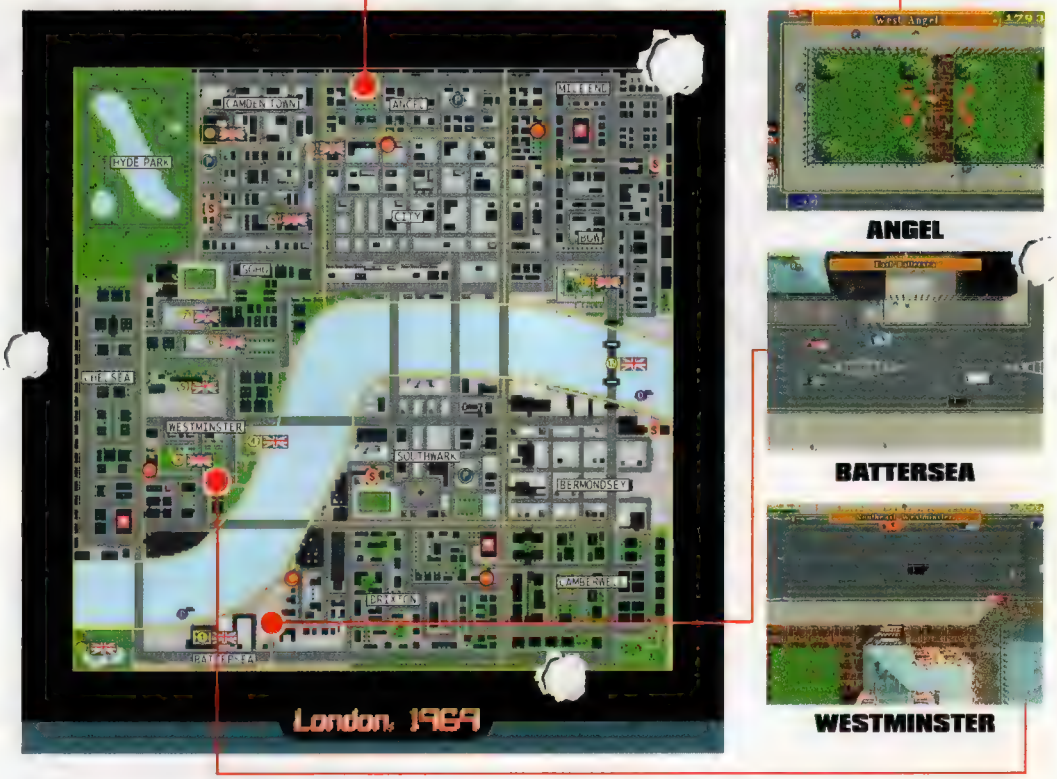
shifty (*adj*) – suspect in appearance. eg. 'he's a shifty geezer'.

slag (*n derrog*) – very common word for a loose woman or generally a rough looking bird (*qv*). eg. 'She's a right old slag'. Used by men and women. It can also (rarely) be applied to men as an insult as heard in '70s and '80s police drama's ('Shut it you slaaag!').

Sweeney Todd (*n*) rhyming slang for The Flying Squad – after the demon barber who turned people into pies. Used as the name for the TV show *The Sweeney*.

tea leaf (*n*)– Rhyming slang for thief.

tooled-up (*adj*) – to arm oneself, usually with improvised weapons like bottles or sticks. eg. 'There was a right ruck dahn the pub last night and then these headcases got tooled-up!'.



means the usual traffic laws and concern for human life can be ignored wholesale, so driving on the wrong side of the road, fleeing the scene of an accident, mowing down slow moving pedestrians and so on barely raise the eyebrow.

Naturally The Law takes a dim view of all this wanton flouting of itself, and hence blue flashing lights are never very far away from your tail. Now, while in Grand Theft Auto the gaming landscape was based around famous Yankee car chase-friendly cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York, in GTA: London the swinging streets of our capital city as it was at the end of the sixties form the backdrop for the nefarious action, with the muscle cars and pickup trucks of before replaced by Minis, red buses, black cabs and suchlike (see boxout).

Reassuringly familiar double yellow lines are everywhere, and of course the traffic drives on the left (as it should), although there's a disappointing lack of tourist-confusing roundabouts to be seen. As you would expect, many of The Smoke's most famous landmarks have been reproduced in GTA's distinctive top-down 2D style, including Hyde Park, Tower Bridge, Buck House and so forth, alongside the less salubrious areas of town such as Mile End, Soho and Camden (although the streets there were strangely empty of the badly-dressed hordes of Italian students and vomiting winos that patrol the real-life equivalent). Extra authentic local sonic flavour comes in the form of the various radio DJs' voiceovers (which can become a bit repetitive rather quickly) and the old-style 'ner-ner ner-ner' sirens of the police cars that hound you down.

A RIGHT LOAD OF DODGY JAM JARS

The all-important range of vehicles ready for you to nab is present and correct, and is without doubt far groovier than its American counterparts from the original Grand Theft Auto. Alongside the ubiquitous cheeky Minis there are sleek Jags (always the villain's favourite for their speed and ramming capabilities), surprisingly quick stretch limos with barge-like turning circles, open top double-decker buses (hilarious to hijack, passengers still on board), The Prisoner-esque Caterham Sevens and of course the trusty black cab clogging up the streets and doing unexpected U-turns. Every so often a Union Jack-bedecked E-type (à la Austin Powers) sweeps by, while an assortment of rugged Land Rovers, vinyl-roofed Capri's and sixties-hangover VW Beetles make up the more mundane end of the vehicular spectrum. The fastest car we've found so far appears to be a silver Aston Martin DB7 lookalike (presumably pilfered from 007) that verily burns the road up big time.

BELOW: A variety of weapons including this machine gun can be found in crates situated around the city.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Aboard a hot moped the plod have got your number. Scarper!; at the helm of a nippy mint-green Capri the saucy lanes of Soho become your playground; hey baby, let's shag! Nicking Austin Power's super-patriotic car is a blast.

Although, obviously, the street layout has been vastly simplified it conveys surprisingly well the impression of a labyrinthine and varied London, with each particular district capturing much of the flavour of the real deal. Tucked away spots such as Soho Square and distinctive buildings like the majestic Battersea Power Station will bring a smile to those that know the city. Along with the expected open roads there's also plenty of ideal hot-pursuit terrain to use and abuse, including mazes of interlocking alleyways, grids of tower blocks with grassy knolls in between, dangerously high rooftops and idyllic parkland, replete with scatterable benches and flocks of pigeons that can get gorily stuck under your wheels. The possibilities for losing a tail (and getting lost yourself) amongst all this are endless, even with a helpful window at the top of the screen giving your rough position, more or less by postal district. To help keep things playable and free from brow-furrowing map reading an arrow always points towards your next objective as the crow flies, making navigation a simple task, although it can mean that you spend a large proportion of your time staring at a yellow chevron instead of at the path ahead which can lead to some painful collisions with other road users or spectacular encounters with the inevitable piles of cardboard boxes that hang around shiftily on street corners, waiting to be smashed up...

Getcha Motah Runnin'

The control system remains the same as before with straightforward go faster/slow down and 'attack' buttons, plus of course the ever-satisfying enter/exit command which sends your man over the bonnet of the nearest car and automatically ejects the driver unceremoniously onto the pavement. While not being the most fluid or intuitive of methods initially it soon becomes easy enough to handle for those used to the more demanding moves of *Micro Machines V3* say, and pure driving fun can be had with even the more lumbering and lengthy vehicles (particularly when bearing in mind their significantly larger traffic-clearing momentum). Bumping up over pavements or haring across grass at seventy miles an hour won't cause too many handling problems, nor will having a nasty head-on collision with a lorry. A side-effect of this is that one tends to drive over-recklessly, as you know it's impossible to do any real damage to your character (unless you're riding a moped or motorcycle, in which case a quick but painless ▶

"Being a gangster of course means the usual traffic laws and concern for human life can be ignored..."

BELOW: The jangling ring of a dog and bone signals new information regarding your next job.

BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS

One of the best features of Grand Theft Auto was, of course, its ever-changing soundtrack, dictated by whatever radio station the car you were driving in was tuned to. In GTA: London the hip-hop and country tunes have been replaced by a superb collection of Reggae and Ska sounds from the famous Trojan record label. Featured tracks include loose-limbed skanking such as 'Return of Django' by the Upsetters and 'Skinhead Moonstomp' from Symarip, alongside more louche toe-tapping cocktail pop such as 'Tiffany Memorandum' and 'Beat Fuga Shake' from the film Colpo Maestro Al Servizo di Sua Maesta Brittanica. It's a Hammond Organ-drenched mix of Jamaican warmth and European sophistication, and immediately makes you want to drop your joypad and do some sixties-style dance with a name like 'The Pigeon', or something.

BUNCH OF PONCES

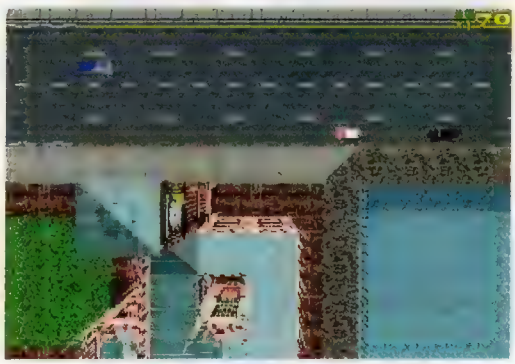
Like its predecessor, GTA: London is packed full of knowing cultural references that nod towards a wide number of well-loved films and TV series. Obviously the seminal homegrown coppers and toe-rag villains seen in shows such as The Sweeney and The Professionals have influenced the crimes seen in the game (despite the slight chronological difference), with dodgy geezers spouting snidey rhyming slang and 'guv'nors' at every opportunity. The profusion of sharp-suited mods on scooters owes a great deal to the amphetamine-fuelled urban disaffection movie Quadrophenia, with its smartly turned out incidental soundtrack of energetic R'n'B echoing many of the spry tunes heard throughout the course of the game. Of course the archetypal sixties London hardman for many is a certain Michael Caine, responsible for both the uncompromising 'hero' of nasty you're-on-my-manor flick Get Carter and the sarcastic but loveable rogue from The Italian Job. It almost goes without saying that red, white and blue Mini Coopers are a common sight, while sly snatches of lovingly cribbed dialogue crop up often in mission briefings – 'It's not a square, it's a piazza!'. One of the gangsters you can choose to play as is also somewhat bluntly named Maurice Caine, and bears a copyright-tickling resemblance to the thespian warhorse. Other sources of inspiration cited by the developers apparently include the excellent pre-Hollywood Bob Hoskins movie The Long Good Friday, a hint of Austin Powers and a dash of On the Buses, strangely enough.

ABOVE: On the wrong side of the tracks with a stolen ambulance, and someone else in need of medical attention...

tumble is the order of the day). Of course artistic licence with realism keeps the gameplay nice and playably fluffy, but it does seem a wee bit over-simplistic behaviour for a 32bit machine, and may well have newcomers raising their eyebrows and eyeing up the technological superiority of GT Interactive's impending *Bullitt*-worshipping *Driver*. However this gay simplicity doesn't interfere directly with the main thrust of the game and arguably increases its cartoonish charm a notch.

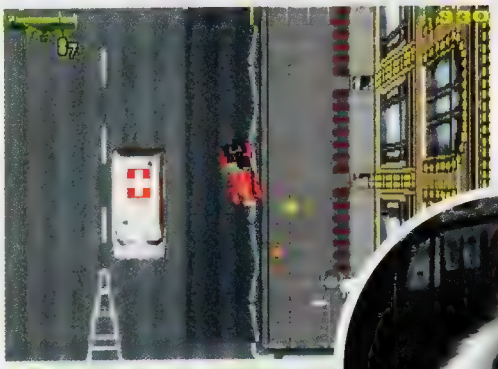
We Are The Mods, We Are The Mods...

The all-important mission structure has been re-thunk significantly though, with a greater emphasis on long-term objectives and a progression of your character through the criminal ranks than in the first GTA. Four distinct 'chapters' see your man begin as a virtual errand boy, merely nicking and then delivering a scooter, but as he gains success the legendary Crisp twins (based not particularly loosely on real-life villains the Kray brothers) start to take notice and take him under their psychotic wing. The three main chapters are split into ten smaller multiple



"...the overall visual impression is one of improvement and added character..."

ABOVE: This motley crew is the line-up of shifty characters available for selection as your unpleasant criminal alter-ego. Anti-socials included alongside the obvious Carter clone are the dapper spivs, boneheaded thugs with lantern jaws, a skinny-rib mod and surly cockney wideboys. Best of all, though, is the hilarious Charles Manson lookalike, alas without his Family in tow.



ABOVE: Parklife! It's not a walk in the park though for that gang of mods that're about to get their nice Italian suits all covered in claret.

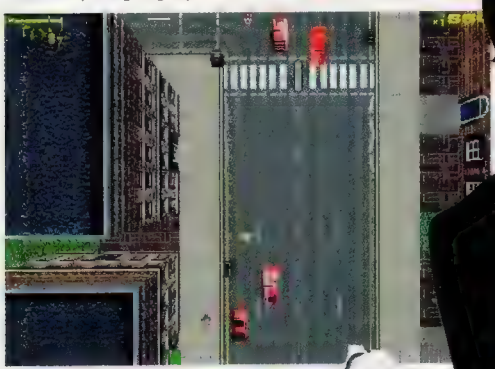
choice missions alongside a clutch of special hidden tasks including stealing the car of a well known suave secret agent and blackmailing a certain disappearing member of the aristocracy who bears a distinct resemblance to Freddie Mercury. Earlier missions require you to undertake jobs such as immolating a gang of 'poncey' mods who have been hassling the Crisp's beloved Mum, blowing up a soccer team's bus before they reach a match to help rig a betting scam, mercilessly roughing up informers and selling 'blues' and 'whizz' to a willing public. Obviously controversy is being deliberately courted by the game's makers keen to keep GTA's lucratively nihilistic chic up and running.

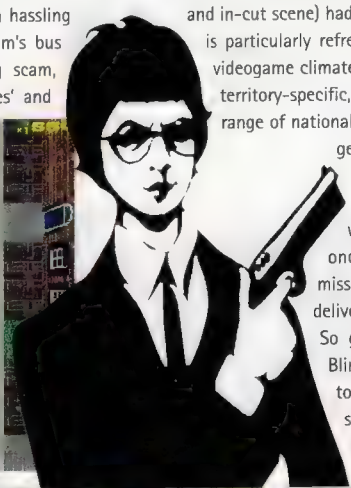
London, Baby, Yeah!

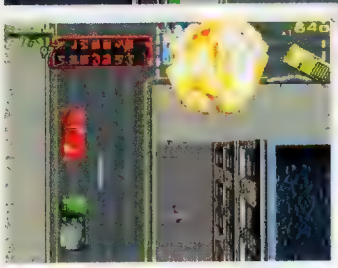
While the quality of the graphics has understandably not changed noticeably from the previous game and the sometimes seasick-inducing zoom camera remains in all its queasy glory, the overall visual impression is one of improvement and added character. Despite being only a single city as opposed to GTA's three, the sheer variety of appearance seen in this digital London make it seem much more earthy, from the glowing neon signs in Soho to the accurately grubby lanes of Mile End. It won't win any awards for visual flair or polish, granted, but the whole package is what matters with this game and any slack in the sprite department (and by heck, they actually are sprites) is made up for in the concept, style and atmosphere created.

The lovingly clichéd cock-er-nee dialogue (both textual and in-cut scene) had us all roaring with mirth and is particularly refreshing in the current commercial videogame climate when titles can't afford to be so territory-specific, as they must be sold to a wide range of nationalities (can you see a French player getting off on all this? We can't).

The basic thrill of roaring around showing no civic responsibility whatsoever is a heady one, and once you buckle down to the missions proper the game continues to deliver shameful enjoyment in spades. So grab yer shooter, pop down the Blind Beggar for a pint and get ready to leg it down your local dodgy software vendor before the rest of the nonces beat you to it.



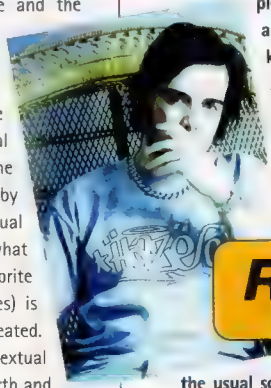




FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: That busload full of Japanese sightseers are getting a far more interesting tour than they bargained for; using a rocket launcher on a coach full of footballers? Fair enough, we say...; astride a nicked mod's scooter you've barely got time to discard his fishtail parka before the next job.

DAN THE ROCKSTAR MAN

Dan Hauser is the producer and 'screenplay writer' of GTA: London and a key player in RockStar, the high-end product development and publishing label from Take 2, winner of the 'Developer with the Most Logos Humanly Possible' award. Conveniently situated in the coolest city on the planet, New York, their avowed goal is to 're-define the role and perception of games publishers and to give the games business a little personality and excitement', admirably pledging to release only a few titles a year to keep the quality high. As well as producing games, the studio will also intriguingly run their own series of 'groundbreaking' club nights in the Big Apple and even stage music concerts. It's a bit more impressive than the usual scabby branded T-shirts, I'm sure you'll agree...



STATION

+ Unique atmosphere and attitude plus enjoyable anything-goes gameplay.

− Some unsophisticated aspects, technically the same game as GTA.

Your parents will hate it for sure, but there's no denying the fun to be had when you're had.

OUT OF 100

92

TRIPLE A TITLE

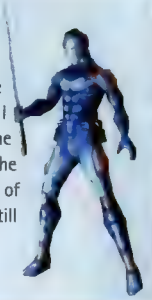
Rated by Christian Slater

STATION nation

STATION MAGAZINE RAPIDE PUBLISHING, 1 ROMAN COURT, 48 NEW NORTH ROAD, EXETER EX4 4EP OR EMAIL THE EDITOR: DARREN@RAPIDE.CO.UK

MISSING THE POINT?

I feel compelled to write in concerning the so-called golden child of the PlayStation; *Metal Gear Solid*. I realise that my argument may raise a few collective hackles, but it needs to be addressed as there is something of an injustice at work. Admittedly, *MGS* is a superlative game without peer, boasting depth and total immersion. This is a completely transient phenomenon, however. I eagerly paid my £40 for the game, expecting many days of uninterrupted gaming pleasure as my girlfriend was away for a week. I had finished the game, on normal difficulty setting, by the next day and was disappointed to say the least. Purists would claim that I should play the game again on hard difficulty, or attempt to gain the hidden features, my point is that the game is offensively short for the asking price and no amount of hidden features can justify playing the game over and over, ad nauseam. If anybody out there is still debating the virtues of purchasing it, I would recommend a second hand copy, played very slowly.



• Richard Pickman, Innsmouth

Metal Gear Solid – Too easy?

TIME AND TIDE AND TEMPEST

Asteroids – The Tekken of the '80s

Why do games companies keep making crappy versions of old games? Just because a game is 'retro', is that really an excuse to churn out piss poor versions of these games? People who played them the first time round should be happy that they've already played them and new players should just not bother and stick with the great games that 1999 can offer. Games like *Asteroids* and *Tempest* were state of the art ten or fifteen years ago, but technology advances and so do ideas for games. We have *Tomb Raider* and *Tekken* that last for ages and really draw you in. Why bother with simple games that are ancient and simply have had a few graphical improvements?

• R Carter, Dudley

GET BACK TO THE DAILY MAIL!

Why do we need the PlayStation 2? I have only had my PlayStation for a few months and the games seem brilliant to me, so why do we all need to buy another piece of hardware and spend more money on a new system. Now my friends are saying that the Dreamcast will be the best system ever, but I spent out money on a Saturn and do not want to make that mistake again. Please, concentrate on making great new games, rather than new systems which are not needed.

• Eddie Hatcher, Leeds

GENRES FOR THE GENDERS?

Why does the games magazine industry continue to be completely sexist and ignore the growing fleet of women players? All of my best friends have PlayStations and we don't use them to play cute games as mags seem to imply, far from it, my favourite game is *Resident Evil 2* and I am looking forward to *Silent Hill*. I can kick my male friends asses on *Tekken* and I really want to read a magazine that doesn't feature a nudie Lara, or other big breasted pixellized tarts.

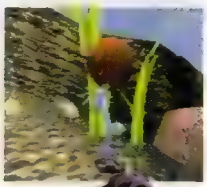
• Nicola Wilks, Bristol

Xiaoyu certainly kicks male ass, but is she a feminist icon or a big breasted tart?

THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS

Although I enjoy games on my PlayStation, I have noticed a worrying trend recently. There seem to be fewer and fewer original games released. Companies either concentrate on licensed products based on television or movies (*Rugrats*/*A Bug's Life*) or they churn out samey sequels to proven winners (hello Lara). As this continues to happen, games become less interesting and our favourite console's foothold in the market may be lost. I bet that *Metal Gear Solid 2* is in development. Why do software makers have to be so lazy?

• Peter Richards, London



SHOOT 'EM ON DOWN

I am writing to complain about the lack of games available on the PlayStation which use the light gun. I was given a light gun for Christmas with a copy of *Time Crisis*. I enjoyed the game, but completed it quickly. I used my Christmas money to buy *Point Blank*, which is also good. Now I want some more games but no shops seem to know of any other titles which use my gun. Are they wrong?

• Leo Moore, Sussex

Do you feel unlucky, punk?

CRAZED READER SEEKS HELP

PlayStation games have ruined my life and I want to warn readers about the dangers therein. I used to be a respectable individual, well adjusted and able to function socially. I received my PlayStation as a birthday gift last September and have been on a downward spiral ever since. I have taken to twitching nervously in pubs when near arcade machines. I have masochistic thoughts about running around town killing with a chainsaw and sawn-off shotgun. I am even considering dressing up as Captain Nemo and jumping out on members of the public. Please, STATION readers, games are lethal things. Play them with care...

• **Eliot Black, Lancs**

MORE METAL GEAR GRUMBLES

Is it just me or are all games becoming easier? I remember when I owned an NES and a Super Nintendo and I would buy a new game and still be playing it months later. Now with my PlayStation, I finish everything very quickly and feel that I don't always get value for money. *Metal Gear Solid* took me two days and I felt that much playing time is not worth my 40 pounds.

• **Anthony Reynolds, Cheshire**

DON'T WE GIVE ENOUGH AWAY?

Do you think I'm writing this for fun?
This is a complaint becuase you don't do enough pages of reviews. In *Tomb Radier III* in issue no. 4 you only did two pages of *TRIII*, my best PSX title in the whole world so you'd better give me some pictures of Lara when you reply. And do reply!!

• **Thierry Griffiths, Lancs**

OK, so we'll break with all precedent and reply, just for you Thierry. STATION's editorial policy is to keep reviews brief and to the point, and illustrate the good and bad points through images, after all every picture tells a thousand words. Try as we might, you see, reviews are basically subjective in nature and we believe that by providing screenshots with short, informative and intelligent descriptions you'll be in a better position to decide which games are likely to appeal to you. As for TRIII, what could we have said that hadn't been said already? You obviously only needed two pages to convice you to buy it, as, I assume, did most other readers. We did devote nearly 40 pages over two issues to the Croft girl in our walkthrough, which contained more than enough pictures for you, as should the year planner given away with issue 4.

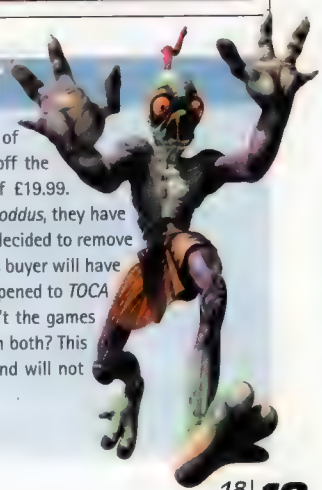
THE VOICE OF REASON

Reading Darren's Tokyo report on the PSX 2 it's hard for even cynicism-hardened hacks such as ourselves not to go all gooey and weak at the knees at the prospect of playing games that basically look like top end FMV and run at speeds which 'til recently were exclusively the domain of supercomputers the size of a bungalow. The big question (as ever) is what will this mean for us the gamesplayers? Nowadays it takes a great deal of expertise on the part of programmers just to make a title look up to date with all the flash and difficult-to-master particle effects, light-sourcing, complex physics and so forth that set out the also-rans from the glittering vanguard. However the PSX 2 will be able to do all this stuff in its sleep, so to speak, and with a lot less hassle than it takes nowadays thanks to the near-magical Emotion Engine and its pre-programmed routines designed to mimic real life. One viewpoint is that a lot of the time currently spent on tricky stuff like this will be freed up for programmers to concentrate on things like clever and innovative gameplay, ever more artistic design of characters, objects and scenery, dramatically sweeping plots and suchlike. Whether every single game can effortlessly achieve this high standard every time remains to be seen however: the buzz in Tokyo suggested that creating PlayStation 2 games would sort the men developers out from the boys, as the levels of fine detail demanded in every aspect of their production will require vast fleets of dedicated artists and technicians to realise, shifting the onus away from technical code creation and more onto pure design. The public is bound to become quickly used to super-real images and the tolerance for anything less is bound to wane just as quickly, particularly as PSX 2 will undoubtedly pull in that final strata of society which hasn't played a videogame or owned a console and don't appreciate the gameplay vs graphics tension that has existed in games for over a decade. Of course the Namcos, Codemasters and Squaresofts of this world are bound to have enough resources to create games that are amazing in every aspect, but the real question is whether the smaller publishers can keep up with the big boys to any convincing degree. The likelihood of the industry ending up as basically three or four super-publishers has accordingly become a much greater possibility, with implications both positive and negative for you, the punter. It's much more likely that the release schedules will be a significantly more sparse than they are now, with a lot less speculative, straight-to £25 type titles being made as the investment required to produce a PSX 2 game will represent too great a risk for all but those with the strongest of wallets. In fact the situation could well end up aping that in the movie industry, with a similar vast roster of massively specialised crew required to put together the multi-faceted end product, with individuals dedicated to specific areas such as lighting, or just surface textures for example. The days of the lone boffin sat in his bedroom tapping away at a spectrum keyboard creating 100% of a game solo seem extremely distant...

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

What the hell are GTI playing at? Having finally decided to splash out on a copy of *Abe's Oddysee*, I find that GTI, the company behind the game, have taken it off the shelves. It's a good game and will sell loads at the pocket friendly price of £19.99. Apparently, possibly because *Abe's Oddysee* is very similar to the sequel, *Abe's Exoddus*, they have lost sales. People are buying *Abe's Oddysee* instead of *Abe's Exoddus* so GTI have decided to remove the offending cheaper title from sale. This is a fascistic thing to do, as the games buyer will have no autonomy in the matter. I can understand why GTI is doing this (the same happened to *TOCA 2* when more people brought *TOCA 1* as it was cheaper at £19.99) but shouldn't the games companies simply make the games different enough to warrant purchasing them both? This shows that the gaming public are clever enough to make informed decisions and will not tolerate being manipulated by mercantile companies.

• **Ruth Randall, Surrey**



TRANSFER LIST
Name Team Value
F Duncan Ferguson Everton £14M
F Hamilton Ricard Middlesbrough £8M
F Ashley Ward Barnsley £3.5M
D Gianluca Festa Middlesbrough £4.5M
D Darren Barnard Barnsley £4.3M
M Marco Holster Ipswich £3.5M
D Arjan De Zeeuw Barnsley £3.4M
D Chris Coleman Fulham £3.3M

ENGLAND VS SWEDEN TICKETS UP FOR GRABS!

YOUR BIG CHANCE TO SCORE

New management sim *FA Soccer Manager* features all the players from the four leagues as well as the conference league, all with authentic attributes and statistics. Officially licensed by the FA it also includes commentary from the legendary Brian Moore and allows you to control every aspect of your team, from contract negotiations to ground improvements.

To celebrate the release of *FA Soccer Manager*, Eidos Interactive is giving you the chance to attend a qualifying game for Euro 2000. The winner will receive two tickets to the game between England and Sweden at Wembley on June 5th and two runners-up will receive a selection of gear from Mizuno.

Mizuno

For your chance to enjoy the action, simply complete the following sentence in 15 words or less:

'IF I WERE ENGLAND MANAGER, I WOULD...'

BE ORIGINAL, BE FUNNY, WIN STUFF. SIMPLE AS THAT.

Answers on a postcard (the cooler the better) to:

WHEN I GROW UP COMPETITION
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All entries must reach us by 20th May 1999.

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NEXT MONTH

EXCLUSIVE DEMO/REPUGNANT PREVIEW!

SHADOWMAN

He's an undead chainsaw-wielding maniac from Hell with something to prove and we've got a first-look rolling demo of this morally ambiguous soon-to-be blockbuster. Darker than *Seven*, more deranged than Jeffrey Dahmer and armed to the teeth with a variety of flesh-chewing weapons, could Shadowman be the anti-PaRappa?

STATION-ONLY DEMO AND PREVIEW!

QUAKE II

It's been a long time coming, but the king of first-person shooters will be stalking a corridor near you soon. See what all the fuss is about with our painfully exclusive rolling demo and preview.

EXCLUSIVE DEMO AND LUCRATIVE COMP!

360

Play Cryo's new high-speed future racing game and then enter our massive Lap Time giveaway. Prizes will include a gargantuan widescreen TV, chilly-cool G-Shock watches and oodles of other top goodies for the swiftest riders who can master our challenging demo level.

YET ANOTHER UTTERLY FABULOUS DEMO DISC

You can take our solemn oath that next month's disc will eclipse even the heady heights of this one in terms of quality, excellence and variety. Mark our words.

ALSO:

No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking
Prince Naseem Boxing
Aironauts
Le Mans 24 Hours
Centipede 3D
Hard Edge
Wingover 2
Um Jammer Lammy
GT Sportscar
Big Air
Asterix
Need For Speed: RC

ISSUE 9 ON SALE 27TH MAY 1999

STATION IS THE BIGGEST SELLING UNOFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MONTHLY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND WE LOVE IT.

PlayStation 2 released MARCH 2000 JAPAN

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モレワマキヨワヨムメ 2 LIFE IN TOKYO

モレワマキヨワヨムメ 2

モレワマキヨワヨムメ 2

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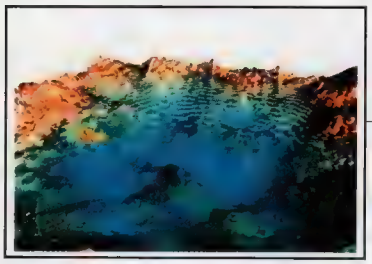
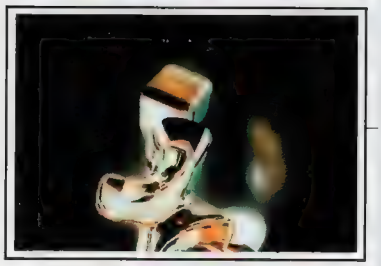
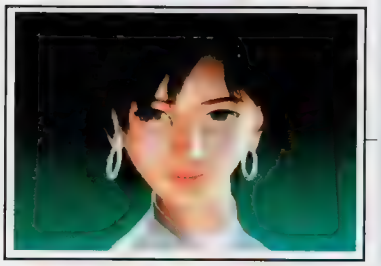
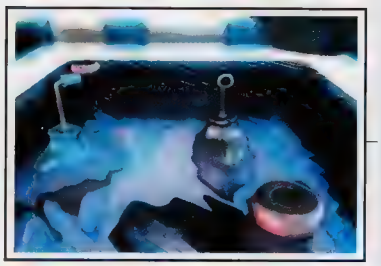
autumn of 2000

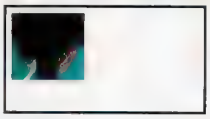
Overseas introduction planned to follow in the

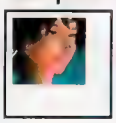


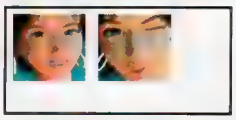












On March 2, 1999, the STATION team were lucky enough to attend Sony Computer Entertainment's announcement in Tokyo of its research and development project to design the successor to the PlayStation. A console that will undoubtedly start a new era in in-home digital entertainment. Here's the overall specs:

NEXT GENERATION PLAYSTATION – BASIC SPECIFICATIONS AND FEATURES

CPU - 128BIT 'EMOTION ENGINE"

System Clock Frequency - 300Mhz
Cache Memory - Instruction: 16KB, Data: 8KB + 16KB (ScrP)
Main Memory Direct Rambus (Direct RDRAM)
Memory Size - 32MB
Memory Bus - Bandwidth 3.2GB per Second
Co-processor - FPU (Floating Point Unit)
Floating Point Multiply Accumulator x 1, Floating Point Divider x 1
Vector Units - VU0 and VU1
Floating Point Multiply Accumulator x 9, Floating Point Divider x 3
Floating Point Performance - 6.2GFLOPS
3D CG Geometric Transformation - 66 Million Polygons per second
Compressed Image Decoder - MPEG2

GRAPHICS - 'GRAPHICS SYNTHESIZER'

Clock Frequency - 150Mhz
DRAM Bus bandwidth - 48GB per Second
DRAM Bus width - 2560bit
Pixel Configuration - RGB:Alpha:Z Buffer (24:8:32)
Maximum Polygon Rate - 75 Million Polygons per Second

SOUND - 'SPU2+CPU'

Number of Voices - ADPCM: 48ch on SPU2 plus definable, software programmable voices
Sampling Frequency - 44.1Khz or 48Khz (selectable)

IOP - I/O PROCESSOR

CPU Core - PlayStation (current) CPU
Clock Frequency - 33.8Mhz or 37.5Mhz (Selectable)
Sub Bus - 32bit
Interface Types - IEEE1394, Universal Serial Bus (USB)
Communication - via PC-Card (PCMCIA)

DISC DEVICE - CD-ROM AND DVD-ROM

STATION magazine invades Japan to uncover PlayStation 2, and the software developers who are pushing the original console past its boundaries with their ground breaking titles.

Here's the new Lancia in Polyphony Digital's sequel to Gran Turismo, gamers will now be able to race production cars over various terrain; PSX 2's amazing firework simulation.

GS Core - Parallel Rendering Processor with embedded DRAM
Clock Frequency - 150Mhz
No. of Pixel Engines - 16 (in Parallel)
Embedded DRAM - 4MB of multi-port DRAM (Synched at 150Mhz)
Total Memory Bandwidth - 48GB per Second

COMBINED INTERNAL

Data Bus Bandwidth - 2560bit
Read - 1024bit
Write - 1024bit
Texture - 512bit
Display Colour Depth - 32bit (RGBA:8bits each)
Z Buffering - 32bit
Rendering Functions - Texture Mapping, Bump Mapping, Fogging, Alpha Blending, Bi- and Tri-Linear Filtering, Mipmap, Anti-aliasing, Multi-pass Rendering

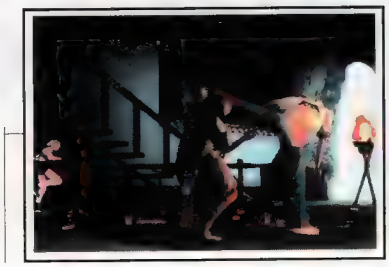
RENDERING PERFORMANCE

Pixel Fill rate - 2.4 Giga Pixel per Second (with Z buffer and Alpha blend enabled) 1.2 Giga Pixel per Second
(with Z buffer, Alpha and Texture)
Particle Drawing Rate - 150 Million/sec
Polygon Drawing rate - 75 Million/sec (small polygon)
50 Million/sec (48 pixel quad with Z and A)
30 Million/sec (50 Pixel triangle with Z and A)
25 Million/sec (48 Pixel quad Z, A and T)
Sprite Drawing Rate - 18.75 Million (8 x 8 Pixels)

DISPLAY OUTPUT

NTSC/PAL
Digital TV (DTV)
VESA (maximum 1280 x 1024 pixels)
Silicon process transistors - 0.25 m 4-level metal
Total number of transistors - 43 Million
Die size - 279mm
Package Type: 384 pin BGA

Sony's Graphics Synthesizer will be the technology behind the increased quality and performance of the graphics seen within the next generation software. A gamer can now be immersed in a richly detailed graphical world with behaviours and complex physical simulations.



Tokunaka & Kutaragi

The men behind the PlayStation and the next generation PlayStation. These two have changed the face of videogaming forever, despite the fact that Sony themselves never even wanted to release the PlayStation on the assumption that there wasn't a big enough world-wide market. The PlayStation has now become a household name and the biggest selling console of all time, taking Sony share prices through the roof.

モレワマキヨワヨムメ 2

Don't Forget The Past

The Japanese are very proud of their heritage and Sony won't be ignoring theirs. With over 3,000 titles for the PlayStation currently available world-wide, the new system will be backward compatible, allowing consumers to continue enjoying their library of software. Your original copies of *Gran Turismo 1* & *2* will be sitting right there next to *3*, *4*...

モレワマキヨワヨムメ 2

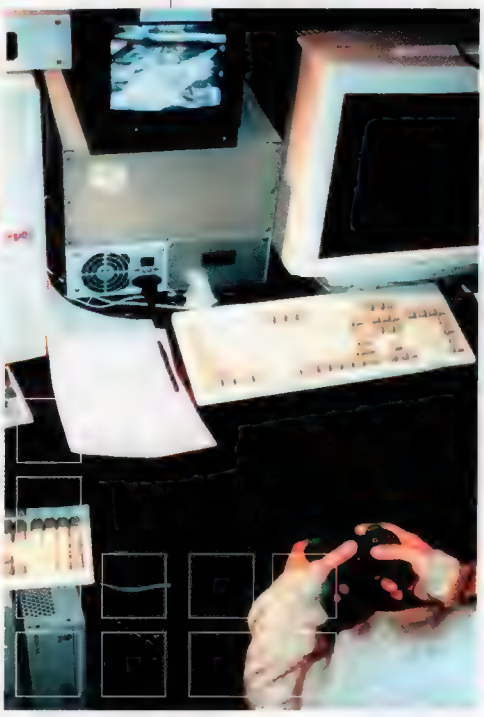
Using the Graphics Synthesizer, Sony have embraced a concept that they have trademarked as 'Emotion Synthesis™'. This allows, for example, the hair and clothing of a character to be effected by a digital wind calculated and processed in real-time. This is achieved by using massive floating-point mathematical calculations, previously only used by super computers for scientific simulation.

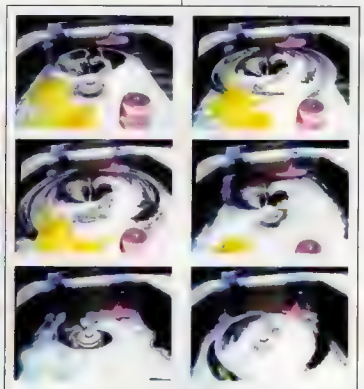
EMOTION ENGINE – FEATURES AND GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

CPU core - 128bit RISC (MIPS IV-subset)
Clock Frequency - 300Mhz
Integer Unit - 64bit (2-way Superscalar)
Multimedia extended instructions - 107 instructions at 128bit width
Interger General Purpose Register - 32 at 128bit width
TLB - 48 double entries
Instruction Cache - 16KB (2-way)
Data Cache - 8KB (2-way)
Scratch Pad Ram - 16KB (Dual port)
Main Memory - 32MB (Direct RDRAM 2ch@800MHz)
Memory bandwidth - 3.2GB/sec
DMA - 10 channels
Co-processor1 - FPU (FMAC x 1, FDIV x 1)
Co-processor2 - VU0 (FMAC x 4, FDIV x 1)
Micro Memory (I:4KB D:4KB)
Vector Processing Unit - VU1 (FMAC x 5, FDIV x 2)
- Micro Memory (I:16KB D:16KB)

Floating Point Performance - 6.2GFLOPS
Geometry
+ Perspective Transformation - 66 Million Polygons/sec
+ Lighting - 38 Million Polygons/sec
+ Fog - 36 Million Polygons/sec
Curved Surface Generation (Bezier) - 16 Million Polygons/sec
Image Processing Unit - MPEG2 Macroblock Layer Decoder
Image Processing Performance - 150 Million Pixels/sec

Gate width 0.18 micon
VDD Voltage 1.8V
Power Consumption - 15 Watts
Metal Layers 4
Total Transistors - 10.5 Million
Die Size - 240mm
Package - 540pin PBGA



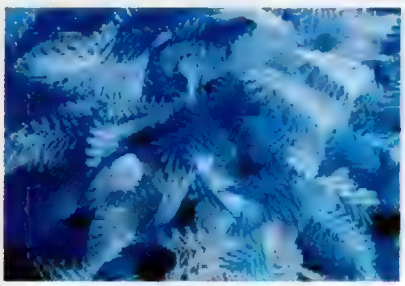


Sony developers were only given a two week time-scale to get this 'sink and duck' demo together for the Tokyo conference.

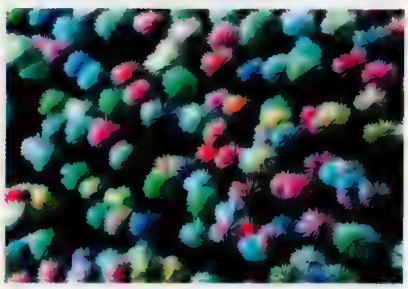
In Action

In this exclusive photograph you can see the next generation PlayStation technology actually working. On the small monitor upon the CPU, you can see the 'sink and duck' software that was demonstrated at the conference in Tokyo. The demonstrator is moving the duck through the water with the D-pad. The movement of the duck produces extraordinarily realistic ripples which in turn move the other objects around the sink. Pressing the triangle button releases the plug draining the water away in a mesmerising whirlpool effect – pulling all the objects inward and downward. The square button, when pressed, turns on the tap refilling the sink with water, the force of the falling water again has massive effect upon the objects in the sink.

This short but ground breaking piece of software developed by Sony demonstrates how their Emotion Synthesis™ will bring videogames to an unprecedented existence based upon realism. It's hard to imagine a duck floating around a sink as changing the face of videogaming, but replace the duck with a zombie and the sink with a pool of blood and you might start to see the picture.

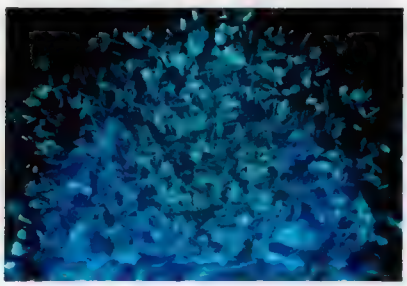


These feathers are being blown around by a gust of wind, created by Sony's new floating-point software.



These colourfull balls of fluff are drawn by millions of tiny lines instead of the usual polygons.

This simulation uses overlaping polygons to create a burning effect. It can also be viewed from any angle.



The floating feathers are now viewed from a distance and with the force of the wind coming from below.

"THE PLAYSTATION HAS NOW BECOME A HOUSEHOLD NAME AND THE BIGGEST SELLING CONSOLE OF ALL TIME, TAKING SONY SHARE PRICES THROUGH THE roof."

BUILDING A FUTURE

Japan without doubt boasts some of the most outstanding software developers in the world. We seized them by the knackers and forced them to tell us their personal and developing secrets.

NAMCO

Ace Combat 3

Release Date: During 1999
Price: TBA
Game Genre: 3D Flight Shooting
Compatibility: Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, NegCon, Arcade Joystick

R&D STAFF

Hiroyuki Onada
Job title: Producer
Joined Namco: 1990
Major titles developed: *Ridge Racer Revolution, Time Crisis*
Favourite games: *Ultima Online*
Hobbies: Tuning cars

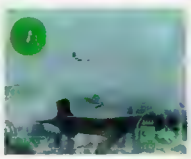
Takuya Iwasaki
Job title: Lead Game Designer
Joined Namco: 1994
Major titles developed: *Ace Combat, Ridge Racer Revolution, Ace Combat 2, Klonoa*
Favourite games: *Dig Dug*
Hobbies: Listening to bossa-nova music

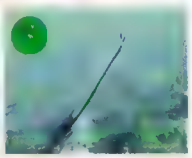
SUMMARY

The level of graphical detail has been substantially improved over the previous game in the series, *Ace Combat 2*. For example, the light of the sun, lens flare and the clouds seen in the distance are more beautifully rendered and the number of objects on-screen will also increase considerably.

In this game, the theme matter has been accelerated far into the future. Aircraft shown in the screenshots roughly follow today's designs, however, many more futuristic and conceptual craft will be introduced as the game progresses.

It features improved graphics, more heated dogfights, and a new concept of the world. Also included are features from the previous versions such as sensitive controls, the exhilaration of flying through the skies and the satisfaction of conducting various missions.





Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis

Release Date: 2nd Quarter
Price: TBA
Game Genre: Sports Action (Tennis)
Compatibility: Memory Card, Dual Shock, Multi-tap

R&D STAFF

Mitsumasa Fujita
Job title: Lead Game Designer
Joined Namco: 1991
Major titles developed: *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis, Namco Museum Vol. 4, Namco Museum Encore*
Favourite games: Fighting (*Tekken, Street Fighter* series)
Hobbies: Basketball, Riding Mountain Bicycles

James Lisle
Job title: Game Designer
Joined Namco: 1998
Major titles developed: *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis*
Favourite games: *Street Fighter Zero 3, Tekken 3*
Hobbies: Snowboarding

SUMMARY

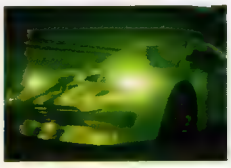
Smash Court Tennis 2 has been given a bit of a make-over for its European release. The first new addition into the series is the inclusion, and endorsement by, one of the world's most popular female tennis professionals; Anna Kournikova. There'll be four different versions of Anna, one being available from the start and the remaining three being gained as the player progresses through the new tournament modes.

A new tournament mode and party play game have been created, these features, along with two completely new street courts, are unique to the PAL version. The other game characters have also been re-evaluated and redesigned, and a few new secret characters included. This time the pace of the game has been quickened to put the speed on par with the NTSC version, and a new easy to perform Auto Serve feature has been implemented to increase the accessibility for first time players.

Ridge Racer Type 4

Release Date: Out now
Price: £39.99
Game Genre: Racer
Compatibility: Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Multi-tap, JogCon

We've got the PAL review this issue, but here is a look at what makes the boys behind this great game tick. The STATION team also entered the Japanese *Ridge Racer Type 4* tournament, and we didn't do too badly either – we polish the trophy everyday!



R&D STAFF

Motomi Katayama
Job title: Producer & Lead Game Designer
Joined Namco: 1991
Major titles developed: *Rage Racer*
Favourite games: *Xevious, Marble Madness, Legend of Zelda* (SNES)
Hobbies: Movies, programming (Visual Basic)

Masatoshi Kobayashi
Job title: Programmer
Joined Namco: 1993
Major titles developed: *Ridge Racer Revolution, Rage Racer*
Favourite games: *Mario Cart* (SNES)
Hobbies: Swimming

Hiroshi Okubo
Job title: Music/Sound Effects
Joined Namco: 1994
Major titles developed: *Rage Racer, Namco Soccer Prime Goal, Ace Combat 2, Klonoa*
Favourite games: *Legend of Zelda* (N64), *Star Blade Alpha, Xevious*
Hobbies: Playing music in a band, computer graphics

Kazutoki Kouno
Job title: Lead Artist
Joined Namco: 1994
Major titles developed: *Smash Court, Rage Racer*
Favourite games: RPGs
Hobbies: Movies, reading books, walking

Kei Yoshimizu
Job title: CG Artist/Movie
Joined Namco: 1995
Major titles developed: *World Stadium EX, Rage Racer, Klonoa*
Favourite games: *Xevious, The Genji & Heike Clans, Populous, Dungeon Master, Myst, Tomb Raider*
Hobbies: Guitar, Riding Motorbikes

モレワマキヨワヨムメ 2

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

Ape Escape

Developer: Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.
Game Genre: 3D Platform
No of Players: One
Peripherals: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

Here's a rundown on a little known game that has been in development in Japan for over two years. We met the developers and then played the game, and realised that this could easily be one of Sony's biggest titles this year. Here's the low-down.

R&D PROFILE

Susumu Takatsuka – Producer

Former employee of Sega, worked on arcade games as designer (*Virtua Fighter*/*Virtua Fighter 2*/*Fighting Vipers*).

Kenji Kaido – Lead Planner

Former employee of Taito involved in the direction and planning of over 10 games including *Night Striker* (arcade 3D shooting), *Camel Try* (arcade action), and *Sonic Blast Man* (arcade punching).

Katsuyuki Kanetaka – Planner

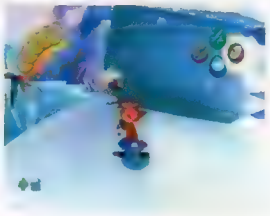
Former employee of Capcom involved in the planning of the arcade game *Street Fighter Zero 2*, and *Street Fighter Zero 2* for the PlayStation and Sega Saturn. Also assisted in *Super Puzzle Fighter 2X* for the PlayStation and Sega Saturn, and involved in the planning of the arcade game *Vampire Saver*.

Takamitsu Iijima – Lead Designer

Joined SCEI at the end of 1996, initially as a part-timer, responsible for the design of all promotional CG artwork for *Wild Arms*.

Kazuo Kato – Lead Programmer

Formerly with the company Epoch worked on *Doraemon* for the PlayStation, supported the production of *Doraemon* for the Sega Saturn, and was involved in the research/development stage for an action game and a soccer game for the N64.



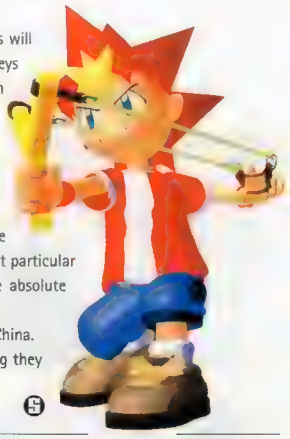
Ape Escape is the first 3D platform action adventure game to be designed exclusively for use with the Dual Shock Controller!

Ape Escape features a group of rebellious monkeys who are intent on changing history in order to rule the world. These monkeys break into the Professor's laboratory to use his Time Machine. Spike and Buzz (working names), two young friends of the Professor, must capture all of the monkeys using a variety of gadgets invented by the Professor if they are to save the world.

For the first time ever in a PlayStation game, players *must* use the Analog Controller to navigate through the 3D environments and manipulate a multitude of gadgets and vehicles.

KEY FEATURES

- The first ever Dual Shock-dedicated game on PlayStation. Exclusively designed to use the Analog Controller. The right stick controls the movement of the main character; the left sick controls the tools and gadgets.
- Players must capture monkeys across 17 levels – all fully 3D – including jungle, underwater, sky, amusement park, factory, beach, inside a huge creature's stomach, ice, snow, mountain and cave environments.
- Variety of character costumes. The monkeys' outfits will change according to the level; eg. in the Ice Age level the monkeys will be wearing warm winter clothes to protect them from the cold, in the Specter Square level they will wear futuristic space suits, etc.
- Various gadgets and tools such as slingshot, dash hoop, net and underwater net, propeller, radio-controlled car, monkey radar, tank and rowing boat.
- Highly intuitive control system that is suitable for first time players and kids as well as advanced gamers.
- Ape Escape features a 'Clear or Complete System' which means that even first time players can clear stages as long as they catch a certain number of monkeys for that particular stage. More experienced players must complete the level fully, experiencing the absolute depth of gameplay.
- Fantastic monkey animation – eg. monkeys that do tai chi at the Great Wall of China.
- Monkey Statistics! The monkey radar information will show the player everything they need to know about that monkey. eg. name, speed, power etc.
- Three mini games and many secret levels...



Um Jammer Lammy

STATION tracked the wackiest developer in the world, the man behind PaRappa the Rapper and Um Jammer Lammy – and also the man that brought them to life.

Masaya Matsuura – Profile

Born in Osaka in June 1961, Masaya Matsuura graduated from the Industrial Sociology Department of Ritsumeikan University. He was 19 years old when he bought his first Apple II and started out on a career as a computer entertainment producer. He sums up the basic concept behind his production work as 'playing around with computers, creating digital entertainment that blends music with computer graphics.'

In 1985, Masaya Matsuura teamed up with vocalist Chaka to form the band PSY.S, which released its first record the same year. The band made nine albums before splitting up in 1996.

Between 1993 and 1996, he produced three pieces of music software for the Apple Mac, all winning acclaim from his peers, but it was in December 1996, that he unveiled *PaRappa the Rapper* for the PlayStation. This title rapidly took the whole of Japan by storm, winning staunch fans and even a female following – who had shown little interest in videogames until then – chalking up phenomenal sales (as of December 1998, the total number of units shipped, including compilations, was 1.3 million). *PaRappa the Rapper* established itself as the benchmark for entertainment software in '96 and '97.

In 1996, *PaRappa the Rapper* was selected for special awards by both the CESA Awards Committee and the Japan Software Awards Committee. It also won an award for innovation at the Japan Game of the Year '97, and the Best Artist award at the Multimedia Grand Prix '97.

In the winter of 1997, the game was released in 70 other countries, including Europe, America and Asia, to universally high acclaim.

Summer 1999 will see the release of *Um Jammer Lammy*, the second title the artist has produced for the PlayStation.

Rodney Greenblat – profile

Born in California in 1960, Greenblat studied painting and sculpture at the New York School of Visual Arts, graduating in 1982. He showed some of his sculptures at the 1985 Biennale mounted at the Whitney Museum in New York, and was catapulted to fame on the contemporary art scene. Since then, his work has featured in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, NY, and in many other places around the world.

Rodney Greenblat first became interested in digital media in about 1985, and has released five interactive CD-ROM titles to date. In 1995, at the USA's biggest computer show, COMDEX, his *Dazzleoids* received the award in the Best CD-ROM for Children category. His talent and popularity have also won him the high accolade of inclusion in *Newsweek's* recent list of top multimedia creators.

His work in Japan began in 1993 with his own animated cartoon feature on Fuji TV's hit children's series *UgoUgo-Lhuga*. His activities have subsequently spanned a wide range of genres, from the PlayStation videogame *PaRappa the Rapper* to CD jacket designs and other material for the pop group Puffy, and his own music CD *Baby Sea Robot*, not to mention work on commercials for Minolta and Family Mart.

Rodney Greenblat has summed up his personal creative ethos as 'giving form to creations of whimsy' (in fact, his company is officially named The Center For Advanced Whimsy). His visual design work can soon be seen in *Um Jammer Lammy*.

Gran Turismo 2

Developer: Polyphony Digital
Game Genre: Racing Simulation
No of Players: 1-2
Compatibility: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card, Steering Wheel

We couldn't go to Japan without grabbing a few words with Kazunori Yamauchi, the man behind the biggest selling PlayStation title ever, Gran Turismo.

STATION: CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

KAZUNORI YAMAUCHI: To be honest, we never expected *Gran Turismo* to become such an extraordinarily popular title. It has been a real thrill for us, as the game's developers, to see the stocks in the game shops being picked up by customers and carried off to the cash desk (and just as gratifying to hear that the game lived up to their expectations!). On our casual visits to game shops overseas, the success of 'our baby' has been brought home to us again and again. We noticed the big promotional displays and saw the promotional video play countless times on in-store TV screens (indeed some of us were so unexpectedly moved by such scenes that we got our cameras out and took pictures!).

STATION: TELL US ABOUT THE SEQUEL?

KAZUNORI YAMAUCHI: To start with, I can tell you that the title will be Gran Turismo 2. As the name suggests, Gran Turismo 2 can be seen as a normal progression from *Gran Turismo*.

The original idea of *Gran Turismo* was to provide a realistic simulation of the behaviour of real cars, and establish it in the game field. To achieve this aim, we carried out research and development work that resulted in the creation of a model which, I believe, has been successful in at least some senses. We have made the simulation as realistic as possible: the cars featured naturally vary in their behaviour, depending on handling methods, tuning and so on. Our attention to detail has even extended to giving each type of car a different engine sound, setting prices for second-hand cars, and introducing environment-mapping technology into the replays. In other words, Gran Turismo 2 will remain faithful to the basic concept of *Gran Turismo* in offering the player all the fun of driving a real car.

In *Gran Turismo*, various constraints prevented us from including all the features we originally wanted to add. In Gran Turismo 2, however, we should be able to include many of these features, as well as many others we have devised on the basis of feedback from users who have played the game.

In another very recent development, we are planning to update the car model selection range to reflect recent changes – model changes and new model launches – to cars in the real world.

We are also intending to make a big increase in the number of car models that can be recorded. Users have expressed the desire for an extremely wide range of models to be available in the game, so we are going to make every effort to accommodate their wishes. In the original game, certain cars had to be excluded because we were not able to draw up licensing contracts with the manufacturers; but we are now engaged in negotiations to this end, and we will let you know the outcome as soon as possible. The next big improvement is in the all-new courses we are now working on. Users will be able to use much more strategic skill and judgement, carefully choosing car performance and features, and tuning and driving styles to match different courses (which will also be visually enjoyable). With regard to car tuning, we think the first version of the game left room for improvement. Within the time available, we will do our utmost to enhance the range of driving pleasures opened up by tuning, as well as making the presentation clearer and more user-friendly. We are also working on the user interface, and making every effort to ensure that all users notice a distinct improvement in the new version. This is about all the information we can release at this stage. We naturally want to make this title available to users as soon as possible, but, as far as the release date is concerned, we cannot yet be more specific than 'this summer'. As regards the future activities of Polyphony Digital, I can tell you that we are also currently working on the development of several titles in genres completely different from *Gran Turismo*. One of these is to be released very soon as Polyphony Digital's very own first title. Throughout the development process, now entering its final phase, we have striven to demonstrate our company's unique enthusiasm for videogame technology. When our first title is finally released, we hope you will be kind enough to continue giving us your valued support.

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METAL GEAR SOLID

COMPETITION

The masses are stampeding, frustrated and full of ire. And not because of another Monica Lewinsky book signing. This is because they cannot get their covetous mitts on the sumptuous Metal Gear Solid action figures shown here. Just admire that detail, that colouring – each curve and nuance lovingly dwelt upon for ultimate realism. How would you like to own these figures? Just imagine the lascivious positions into which you could entwine Snake and Meryl.

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TOTAL GAMES NETWORK

Back in *PaRappa* territory again, with a new female guitar-slinging hero. Get ready to believe!

ALL RAPPED UP

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The coolest DJ in town hits the decks; this fella is the fire chief and he needs your help to put out his raging blazes; Lammy takes a trip to the countryside to carve herself the most rocking guitar in the world; Lammy gives up her sex and drugs lifestyle temporarily to look after a manic bunch of snivelling baby bunnies...

UM JAMMER LAMMY

PUBLISHER: Sony

DEVELOPER: In-House

RELEASE DATE: July

GAME TYPE: Rhythm Action

PAL Percentage Complete: 85%

EARLY VERDICT

UM JAMMER LAMMY: For

The sequel to one of the most refreshing and original games ever.

UM JAMMER LAMMY: Against

A bit too fluffy for some, and can it compete with the big boys like *Beatmania*?

Anticipation Rating 80%

Fans of the surreal original will no doubt lap it up like thirsty dogs.

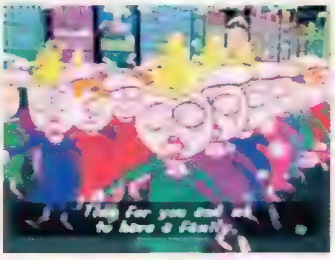
PaRappa the Rapper was a ray of sunshine for those looking for something completely original, yet since the rapping pooch burst onto our consoles the likes of *Beatmania* have been attempting to steal its crown. Now a sequel, Um Jammer Lammy, is set to show the young whippersnappers who is boss, even though the original hero has been replaced by a babe called Lammy who doesn't rap, but certainly plays a mean guitar.

Lammy quickly finds herself in a series of increasingly surreal situations. By following the on-screen button patterns and repeating them exactly in an timed fashion you will make Lammy jam along to the appropriate backing track with her guitar, and receive a rating from 'Cool' to 'Bad' depending on accuracy of button tap. No good rating, no more music. The opening level introduces us to her band, Milkcan, and who is the lead singer with this rocktastic combo? None other than our old friend Mr Chop Chop Onion, now dressed in rags having fallen on hard times and losing his beloved dojo.

Level two sees our heroine leave her traditional axe behind, swapping it for a firehose with which to strum and help put out a blaze raging downtown. A Barry White-like character runs the fire brigade, keeping the music

SEA OF FACES

The cast of cut-outs in Um Jammer Lammy features a few familiar countenances from PaRappa's exploits, but for the large part the faces you encounter will be new. Most of them prove that the human imagination knows no bounds.



BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: There's terror in the sky, but missing those riffs means that Lammy will come back to Earth with an humiliating bump; watch out world, there is a new musical hero in town destined for stardom.

lively and funky. The plot, such as it is, thickens with Lammy thinking herself pregnant (PaRappa, you dirty dog!) and practising in a maternity ward while awaiting a little bundle of joy. It's a false alarm, but for her troubles, she gets to look after a bunch of snivelling brats, whilst the music turns to '60s surf pop that the Beach Boys would be proud of. The madness continues with airborne trashing at the controls of an aeroplane and a heavy metal tune that makes Metallica sound like All Saints, and then a singing beaver.

Going Down A Storm

The climax of all this weirdness is a badly placed banana skin which takes the life of our poor maiden and forces her to play one final concert in the satanic underworld of Hell. No, really. Complete this stage and... no we won't reveal the surprise that awaits you, but trust us, it is cooler than a Kinder egg.

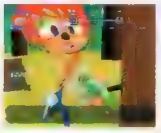
Lammy never loses her head, of course, and meets every challenge with a hearty 'leave it to Lammy' attitude. On the whole, the game is both disturbed and inspired and you'll have little choice but to submit to its colourful world of kaleidoscopic madness. It will prove to be both compulsive and irritating in almost equal measure, but never enough to lose the one-more-go charm. The moves are more complex than the original, but much simpler than *Beatmania*. Despite this, in terms of easily-accessed fun, Lammy wins by a mile.

Contender for most bizarre and eye-popping game of the year? You gotta believe. S

SMALL OBJECTS

Through the game, various pieces of equipment can be obtained, including a harmoniser and a flanger, controlled by the analogue stick. Rocking!

"...you'll have little choice but to submit to its colourful world of kaleidoscopic madness..."



BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: Who needs Hendrix or Cobain when you can have this cute blue character spanking the proverbial plank?; here's a guest vocalist who seems strangely familiar. Is it Snoop Dogg?

JUMBOS FOR GOALPOSTS

PUMA STREET SOCCER

PUBLISHER: Infogrames

DEVELOPER: SunSoft

RELEASE DATE: June

GAME TYPE: Footie Sim

PAL Percentage Complete: 90%

EARLY VERDICT

PUMA STREET SOCCER: For

Different from the no-risk populist soccer sims, quick of pace.

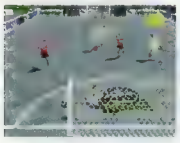
PUMA STREET SOCCER: Against

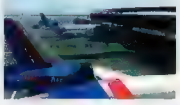
Needs refinement in the control system and AI, a bit graphically unambitious.

Anticipation Rating: 50%

The change of style could be a refreshing change, although there needs to be a bit more polish on the final product.

"Cunningly rebounded passes are the order of the day, opening up new possibilities for attacking moves..."





REPLAY VALUE

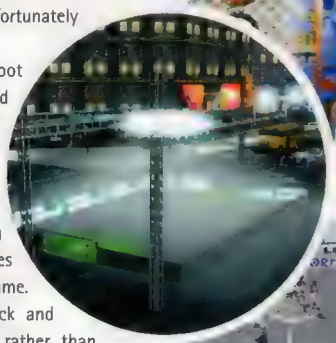
That lynchpin of the footie game, the replay mode, is of course present and correct, letting you re-live those flashes of brilliance (or just plain see what the hell it was the computer did to score, as the ball can be a bit hard to spot at times).

While the five-a-side kickabout is usually just an elaborate excuse for a brawl, SunSoft have taken the concept a step further.

FROM LEFT TO MIDDLE: A range of camera viewpoints can of course be chosen from, with this isometric view proving surprisingly useful; the goalies fortunately don't mind hurling themselves at unforgiving tarmac to save the ball.

As I'm sure you're aware there are just too many goddamn football sims on the market, flooding it worse than Devon on a particularly rainy day. Sensing this, one assumes, Infogrames have taken a lateral step and moved away from the likes of *Big Name Licensee World Champions' Official Soccer League '99* and gone back to football's amateur roots with Puma Street Soccer. Instead of the normal hallowed stadia from around the globe, the matches take place in odd locations such as a car park, airport and city streets, although unfortunately the players aren't scruffy street urchins.

Sponsored by the stalwart boot manufacturer, the ball-kicking action is based around international teams playing in walled five-a-side arenas, with no throw-ins so that the pace of play remains swift. Cunningly rebounded passes are consequently the order of the day, opening up original possibilities for attacking moves that throw a new light on the beautiful game. It's end-to-end stuff of course, with quick and accurate passing the keynote to success rather than storming solo runs or merely speculative hoofing of the ball. Nifty backheels and streak-inducing super shots can be pulled off via some straightforward button taps, along with the now requisite armoury of overhead bicycle kicks and suchlike. Alongside the usual array of exhibition and knockout tournaments there is a novel penalty shoot-out in which the attacking player can run with the ball for a short time before shooting. Be warned, this title looks very promising indeed.



ABOVE: Countries from around the globe play Puma Street Soccer, apparently.

A LOTTA GAUL FOR A LITTLE FELLA

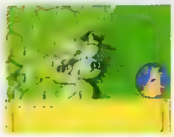
Take one small guy with obscene facial hair, one obese rock carrier and a highly suspect pick-me-up potion.

LEFT TO RIGHT: A lone soldier stands in the way of our helmeted hero, let's just hope, for his sake, that the legion is not far behind...; now, the northern tribes were, on the whole, shorter than the proud Meditteraneans, but this is pushing it.

Imagine how life would be without the dubious accomplishments of the tie-in game. Much better. No pathetic releases made credible only by a recognised protagonist and no wasted cash. Infogrames, however, have valiantly ignored past form and have offered us Asterix in a vainglorious effort to convince us that the tenuous licence is a good thing. Essentially, the game is a quest for territory against the invading Romans, with a turn-based interface which resembles the board game *Risk*. The strength of your garrisons is represented by the arguably narcotic 'magic' potion that gives Asterix his powers. The turn sequence runs thus: increase the fortifications of each garrison with the potion, attack Roman installations and move 'potion' to weakened outposts.

Romans Go Home

Attacking some outposts whisks you to a platform section, which sees Asterix or Obelix laying about hapless Romans and roaming the landscape grabbing the customary pick-ups. From what we've seen, the game doesn't deviate much from this theme and could well prove irksome as you have to wade through the strategy parts to access the platform sequences. Also worthy of note is that the whole tie-in concept seems to add little to the game itself – it could easily be the same action with the *Rainbow* crew transplanted in place of the Gauls, although the thought of Bungle carrying out violent partisan acts is a worrying one. With a wide range of dedicated platform and strategy games on the market this may only appeal to the younger player, but even they seem to prefer *Tekken 3*, bless 'em.



LEFT: Could this obstacle reveal clues as to the real purpose of stone circles?

> "The whole tie-in concept seems to add little to the game itself. It could easily be the same game with the *Rainbow* crew..."

ASTERIX

PUBLISHER: Infogrames
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: May/June
GAME TYPE: *Risk*/Platform
PAL Percentage Complete: 70%

EARLY VERDICT

ASTERIX: For
Curious blend of platform action and strategy planning may entice gamers from both camps.

ASTERIX: Against
Tenuous tie-in with little relation to the books, not to mention very little game to tell of.

Anticipation Rating: 35%
May appeal to the hardcore Asterix fan. Or the French. Little else potentially for the mainstream PlayStation gamer, though.

EDGE OF NO CONTROL

***Resident Evil* on big-eyed manga pills? I'd buy that for a dollar...**

HARD EDGE

PUBLISHER: Unsigned
DEVELOPER: Sunsoft
RELEASE DATE: TBA
GAME TYPE: Exploration/Adventure
PAL Percentage Complete: 90%

EARLY VERDICT

HARD EDGE: For
Captures the feel of *Res Evil* nicely, and looks pretty attractive to boot.

HARD EDGE: Against
Very dodgy enemy AI, unresponsive control system hinders combat, invisible objects and doors.

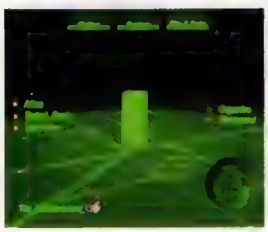
Anticipation Rating 60%
While Hard Edge most certainly looks the part it is worryingly unsophisticated in several key aspects, bringing into question its ultimate quality.

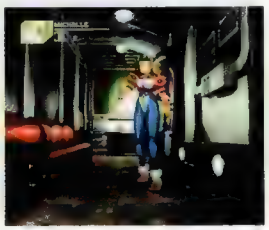
"...a pleasing visual mix that caused a fair few coos of appreciation from passing colleagues in the office..."

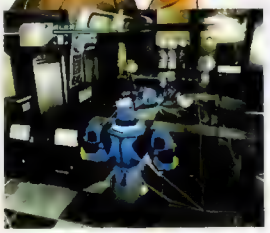
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: In the boardroom, two skulking terrorists foolishly attempt to take on Alex's firearm with puny knives; getting cornered in the showers by a hulking brute is usually something only prison inmates get to enjoy.

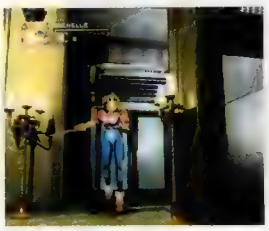
With *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* looking like a dim and distant PSX possibility it was only a matter of time before someone took the distinctive style and visual feel of Capcom's survival horror classic and transplanted it, heart, lungs and all into the body of another game. Hard Edge approaches its subject matter from the same formula of angular yet static camera positions and super-detailed backdrops, and then adds a dash of anime aesthetics where *RE* was all B-movie gorefulness. The scenario (which borrows lavishly from the first *Die Hard* movie) concerns a terrorist occupation of the enormous Togusa skyscraper, and focuses particularly on the two survivors of a SWAT-type team which was otherwise wiped out while attempting to store the captured building. Now macho chap Alex and the unsurprisingly buxom Michelle must penetrate the labyrinthine corridors to track down the terrorists and their wily leader Crowfoot, avoiding or just plain destroying the droid guards and nastily mutated henchmen which riddle the building. However the duo keep finding things which don't belong in a mundane office building, arousing their suspicions...

Unusually, it's possible to switch between the two characters at will as the pair

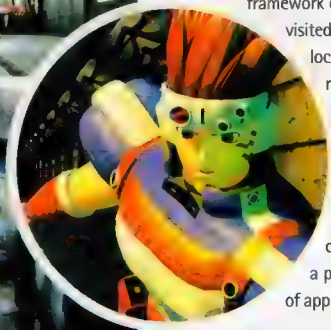




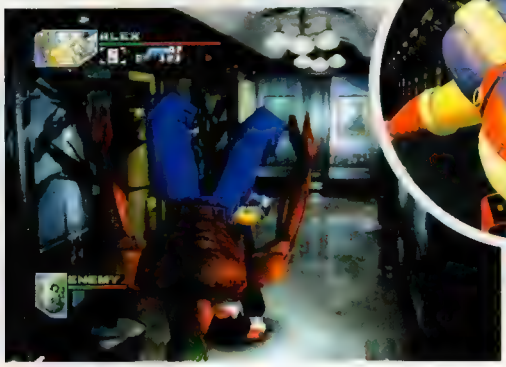




FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A bully-boy droid gets ready to spin on the spot and whirl its huge metallic fists in a painful arc; Michelle's blade does the trick, and sends this robot to the great scrapyard in the sky.



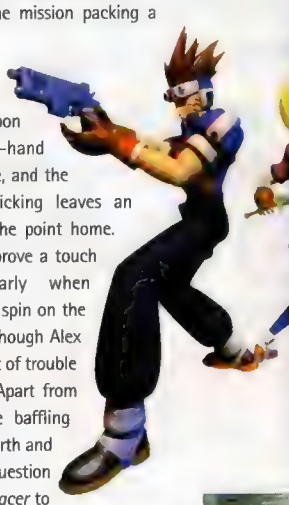
split up at an early stage. Later in the game more friendlies are encountered who can become a part of the team and be controlled independently in turn, meaning some of the later puzzles will require the concerted and enmeshing efforts of all four to progress. The framework of Hard Edge will be familiar to any that have visited Racoon City, based as it is around flip-screen locations, sudden firefights with an idiotic but relentless enemy plus wonderfully cheesy ham dialogue. Effectively it looks as if a couple of *Final Fantasy VII* characters have been dropped into the scenery of *Res Evil*, while the ancillary imagery seen in the smart intro films takes its cue from trashed-visual cyberpunk flicks such as *Ghost in the Shell*. It's a pleasing visual mix that caused a fair few coos of appreciation from passing colleagues in the office.



ABOVE: Take that you blackguard! A gangly mutant thug gets knocked for six by Alex.

Let Me Have That Love, It Might Go Off

Somewhat unfairly, Alex begins the mission packing a pistol while in an appaling bout of weapon-based sexism the strangely-attired Michelle only gets a knife (see boxout). Both can call upon a combination of hand-to-hand techniques when an enemy is close, and the young lady's athletic kung-fu kicking leaves an attractive trail in the air to ram the point home. Aiming any of the weaponry can prove a touch problematic however, particularly when surrounded as the characters don't spin on the spot with any sense of urgency, although Alex can athletically back flip or dash out of trouble with a double tap of the D-pad. Apart from that there are progressively more baffling problems to solve, key cards to unearth and proximity mines to avoid. So the question is: could Hard Edge be *Ridge Racer* to *Res Evil*'s *Gran Turismo*? In the land of blunt analogies, anything is possible.



WEAPONS LOCKER

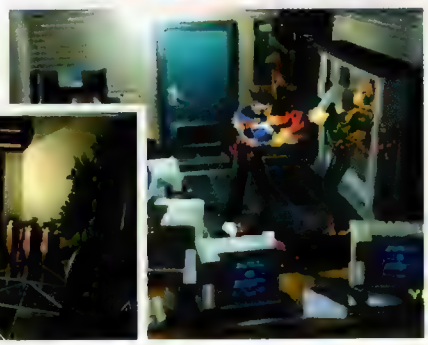
A manga hero is only as good as their arsenal, as the saying probably goes, and in Hard Edge this credo rings true. Alex's gun packs a decent enough punch while Michelle's apparently weedy knife has a vibrating blade that can cut through flesh and armour with ease and these electrically charged tonfa add a new and painful spin to an ancient peasant's weapon.

MEET THE FOLKS

To further reinforce the similarities with Resident Evil, there's a boy/girl line up of stars.

With a haircut unrivalled in its sheer bigness Alex cuts an unusual dash, although when it comes down to the nasty stuff he can dish out the punishment with either gun or his quick fists. Unfortunately he walks with an extremely mincing gait that's not at all becoming for a techno-warrior about town.

Michelle has an interesting cut-out kind of breast porthole in her outfit, and Alex decided he should have the pistol, but this ponytailed and massive blue-eyed babe is no pushover. Her elegant and forceful martial artisms get her out of trouble without much bother anyway, although she does pout and say "***" if left idle for only a couple of seconds, the attention-seeking cow.



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PLAYED AND RATED

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[59] – BOMBERMAN) [60] – FINAL FANTASY VIII [62] – BEATMANIA

BETTER THAN SEX, LOUDER THAN A BOMB

Here at STATiON we still favour the trusty percentage rating above other less finely-tuned methods of scoring. Here is an explanation of what these marks correspond to in the real world.

95-100%

A videogame for all seasons that rewrites the rulebook with a cavalier flourish. Almost perfect, virtually flawless, better than sex, it is groundbreaking, thrilling and engrossing in excelsis, in a similar manner to that last Blur single.

90-94%

A splendid title that just brushes the top category yet doesn't quite have that slippery star quality which makes it an undeniable modern classic. Much like being made breakfast in bed by a silent Britney Spiers.

80-89%

A strong and playable offering without doubt, but one that may not appeal across the board to the entire PSX massive. Those trusty fans of the genre will love it more than their mothers, though.

70-79%

Don't get us wrong, anything falling into this bracket will still be a decent game, although it may be a touch thin in certain important aspects, leaving some individuals dissatisfied. Emotionally analogous to Airwaves chewing gum, more or less.

60-69%

Things are definitely getting dodgy by now, with a clutch of weak spots and unavoidable flaws that inevitably wear the shine of potential fun off a game. Kind of like eating Shreddies and finding there's no sugar on them.

50-59%

Those titles which scrape into this category (and they are legion) show obvious signs of beastly ghastliness, with teeth-grinding basic problems that prevent any right-minded individuals from getting off on it. Creates a feeling much akin to actually listening to a Britney Spiers album.

40-49%

If the God of the Old Testament existed, he would seek out the programmers of a game that scored this low and smite them with his wrath, while we journalists look on and rejoice. Obviously iffy graphics, lumpen and unlovely gameplay and low production values are an inevitability.

20-39%

To get drubbed this badly a title's publisher must have known how undeniably bad and lazy it was, and thus it deserves to be put up against a proverbial wall and shot in the metaphorical forehead. You have been warned.

0-19%

As yet, nothing has achieved such a low mark in STATiON, as it would require a game to be so cack it isn't actually playable in the accepted sense of the word. Tremble in fear of this dark day when it comes, my friends.

TRUST THE TRIPLE A

In this crazy world ruled by weak-minded marketing men and their loathsome ilk there's not much you can trust anymore, apart from STATiON's glittering Triple A badge that is. It's our personal guarantee of worthiness in the field of excellence, and any game achieving this Oscar-belittling award deserves a space on your shelf with no messing, sonny Jim. We've built a shrine in the office to the Triple A that we all kneel before every lunchtime, y'know.

TALKING PAGES

Here is a quick guide to what to expect on the pages of STATiON's Played and Rated section:

- **INFO BOX**

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis **DEVELOPER:** Attention To Detail **RELEASE DATE:** May **GAME TYPE:** Future Racing
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Steering Wheel

All you could possibly need to know at a glance about the title in question, technical speaking, that is. Who made it, what's it worth and can I play it with a friend?

PLAYED AND RATED INDEX

40 **BLOODY ROAR 2**
Claws flash, talons tear, jaws snap, blood flows.

42 **RIDGE RACER TYPE 4**
Tyres squeal, a girl struts, the ridges await.

44 **ACTUA ICE HOCKEY 2**
Toothless armoured blokes periodically brawl.

45 **KKND KROSSFIRE**
The intoxicating din and clamour of post-apocalyptic warfare.

46 **TANK RACER**
Big tracked metal buggers feel the need for speed.

48 **WARZONE 2100**
The awful, heady thrill of conflict in a battle-scarred landscape.

50 **DIVER'S DREAM**
A fascinating undersea world of fish, all ready to be speargunned.

51 **TRAP RUNNER**
Cunning booby trappings.

52 **T'AI FU**
A martial arts-skilled and stripey feline beats up his fellow fauna.

54 **BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE**
The mad bomber puts his foot down.

55 **R-TYPE DELTA**
Storms of deadly iridescence attack again.

56 **GLOBAL DOMINATION**
Re-live Eighties nuke paranoia, then laugh.

57 **YO YO'S PUZZLE PARK**
Deranged madmen shrieking and throwing bombs.

SMALL REVIEWS

58 **MSH VS STREET FIGHTER**
Superpowered individuals take on mere mortals on a level playing field.

58 **G-POLICE PLATINUM**
Airborne Fuzz for very few pennies.

59 **SOUL BLADE PLATINUM**
Slash, parry, dodge, turn, bleed.

59 **BOMBERMAN**
Grid based explosives

IMPORT REVIEWS

60 **FINAL FANTASY VIII**
Like slowly shifting tectonic plates, the hours just flew by.

62 **BEATMANIA**
Wikkity-wikkity-wak!

NO.1 WITH A BULLET

BLOODY ROAR 2

Down kitty! We at STATION think this balls-out eyeball-activating fighter is as much fun as you can have without actually playing *Tekken 3*, so turn to page 40 and see why there's more to making animals scrap than just cock fighting in some countryside barn.

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

Loved by many for its no-fuss handling and cheery outlook, R4 is a gorgeous slice of smiley racing action that pushes the visual envelope out of *Gran Turismo*'s reach and then has a good shout about it. An office favourite for a while already, the PAL release is scrutineered closely on page 42.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Kiss your life goodbye and strap on your questing boots 'cos *FF* is back, and it's got some time to kill. It may be completely in Japanese but sod it, we know you want to find out what's in store for all those hardy players of rotos out there. Can it be more epic than *FFVII*? Page 60 holds the answers, my brethren.

• FIRST TEN MINUTES

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Possibly the eeriest first ten minutes ever, with the control confusion made worse by the grinding, pulsating music that lurks in the background.

Do first impressions really count? Is it love at first sight or instant repulsion? Find out here.

• THE COMPETITION

COMPETITION

RESIDENT EVIL
The deserted (almost!) mansion provides a similar atmosphere. And cheeseball dialogue.

RESIDENT EVIL 2

Life is full of choices. Whatever the review score, there may be an alternative to the game in question, and this is where you will find it.

• PLUS/MINUS

\+ Genuinely terrifying soun
Adult-themed and matur

\- Suffers from a repetitiv
puzzle structure.
Cripplingly bad dialogue.

Reasons why you should consider this game, reasons why you should be wary.

• SCOREBOX

zle structure.
plingly bad dialogue.

ctive
on-building
y a slightly
ying game.

OUT OF 100

83

Rated by Christian Slater

This is what you're looking for. This is the country's most respected PlayStation magazine score: 100% unofficial, 100% unbiased, 100% honest!

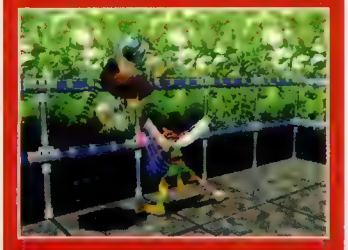
BLOODY ROAR 2

PUBLISHER: Virgin **DEVELOPER:** Hudson **RELEASE DATE:** 30th June
GAME TYPE: Beat 'em–up **NO OF PLAYERS:** 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Straight away the gorgeous graphics impress even cynical souls, while the control system is balanced and logical, rewarding the skilful but enticing the amateur.

POETRY IN MOTION



Quite the most impressive element that makes BR2 so cool is the stylish and aesthetically pleasing way in which the characters move once they get going. We've all seen multi-hit combos before but the sequences of swipes and kicks here take things a definite step further, with the combatants pulling off outrageous but elegant manoeuvres that can seem closer to a choreographed dance than outright aggression.

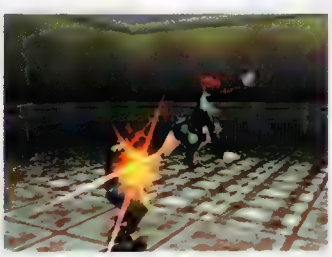
Whilst transforming into a savage blood-lusting beast is usually a fantasy reserved for the mentally deranged, in this game it's a definite must.

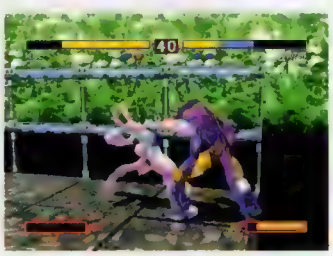
LEFT TO RIGHT: Too close for comfort here as we see Alice get pummelled in replay mode; the wireframe alternate reality that warps in during certain moves is reminiscent of Tempest X3, oddly enough.

As you may have detected from our somewhat gushing preview in issue 6, we're already pretty enamoured with Bloody Roar 2. It's been like a sweet breeze of fresh air wafting through the musty fighting game genre showing the same kind of panache that makes *Gran Turismo* more than just driving a car around some tracks. Challenging Namco's iron-grip stranglehold on all things beat 'em-uppy isn't easy, and little sympathy is given to even pretty competent games (such as *Dead or Alive* and *Kensei* to name but two). Low profile developers Hudson have pulled the man-sized rabbit out of the bag however, by sifting through the best points of other fighters and adding a sweet icing of cutting edge graphical wizardry to produce a no-nonsense spine of stout and flexible gameplay, with an honourable and enjoyable gimmick attached that sets it out from the also-rans.

Manimal Farm

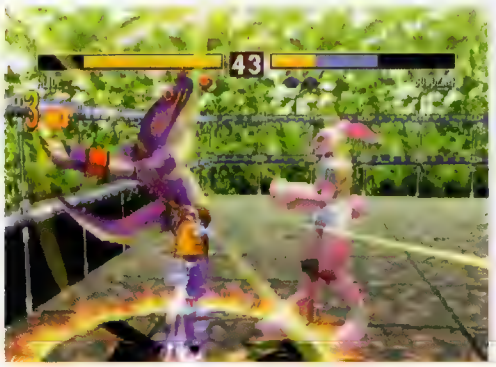
Those familiar with the first *Bloody Roar* will recall that this schtick involves the initially humanoid warriors exhibiting the *Altered Beast*-inspired ability to transform into an animalistic alter ego which boosts both their fighting prowess and agility, and also blesses them with all manner of claws, talons, fangs and other predatory accessories. During the course of a scrap a bar at the bottom end of the screen slowly fills depending on your aggression and success in mauling the opponent. When topped up by a tap of circle, it triggers a nifty pyrotechnic effect that hurls an aggressor violently back and changes your character into their super furry incarnation. A certain number of moves are common to both forms, whilst a great many more extreme attacks can only be accomplished when transformed (often with the aid of a flap of wings or similar). The fairly obvious range of basic fauna seen in *Bloody Roar* has





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The insect Stun's electrical abilities can create some spectacular side-effects; bat-woman Jenny sticks her stiletto heel somewhere it really shouldn't go; if you go down in the woods today, there are stranger things than bears around...

"It's been like a sweet breeze of fresh air wafting through the musty fighting game genre"



LEFT TO RIGHT: Reptilian Busuzima faces up to Alice the cotton-tail moments after his transformation; changing form is a useful defensive move that can buy you some space to launch a counter-attack.

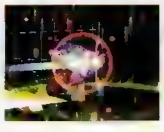
been beefed up by the introduction of more exotic beasties, in particular Busuzima the gangling chameleon/punk, who can intermittently make himself blend invisibly into the background or grab an aggressor's ankle with his snaking tongue, and Bakuyru the vole-boy, whose chinless wonder human shape doesn't hint towards the hulking and horribly clawed tunnel-digging combatant he becomes when riled.

Don't Be So Beastly

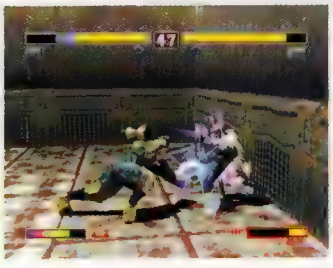
Alongside the expected whizz-bang impact effects and vapour trail claw stripes which greet the more spectacular moves there are numerous understated graphical nuances that subtly ups the technical ante for this kind of game, all drawn in delicately detailed hi-res mode and shifting about with a lithe swiftness that makes the PAL *Tekken 3* seem decidedly doped up. Clipping and slowdown are banished to some distant place in the memory.

Gorgeously smooth flesh tones and convincing pelts are shaded in realtime while a proper shadow is cast on the floor at the fighter's feet, varying with the sun's angle and adding to the overall realism of the tableaux no end. The fighting system follows the same trend for high production values as the polygons, being an eclectic distillation of the more playable tendencies exhibited in other recent games. Whilst there's plenty of scope for unskilled players, the ascending 'pyramid' of moves is pitched perfectly between basic and accessible attacks through to elaborate strings of combinations. Blocking comes about through a dedicated button press rather than simply pushing away, and although a fashionable side-step move has been omitted there is still plenty of lateral movement about the arena going on during the course of a confrontation. A mêlée feels fluid and fun, but there's still an undercurrent of hard-nosed and detailed technicality at the heart of the fighting which gives the game scope beyond the more immediate and rewarding thrills.

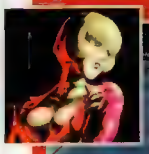
"...delicately detailed hi-res graphics shift lithely about, making the PAL Tekken 3 look doped..."



In lieu of *Soul Calibur* making a PSX appearance, rest assured that this game will be sitting very prettily at the top of the beat 'em-up food chain.



THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT JENNY



Our personal favourite character is, unsurprisingly, busty the coquettish flying vixen. In her tasty human form and bare-buttocked bat guise she's a fascinating chick, particularly when she wins a bout and taunts her opponent with "You're very pretty when you're in pain. What a girl...

COMPETITION

TEKKEN 3
Obviously. The lofty yardstick to which all fighting games aspire.

97%

SOUL BLADE
Closer in feel and look to *Bloody Roar* than *T3*, now on Platinum.

92%

STATION

Lush and incandescent visually, with equally spry kinetic gameplay.

Perhaps not quite as deep ultimately as *Tekken 3*, it lacks features such as a practice mode.

A crackling synergy of sharp-nosed playability and graphics to die for.

OUT OF 100

94

TRIPLE A TITLE

Rated by Christian Slater

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Namco **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Racer
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–4 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Steering Wheel

R-TYPES

Gary Numan felt safe in his. *Knight Rider* had one that talked. Can we really tolerate another car in our lives?

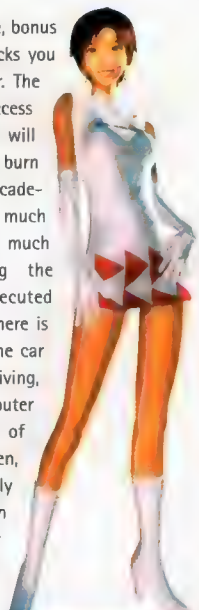
LEFT TO RIGHT: The replays are convincing enough to approach TV-realistic, PlayStation 2 eat your heart out!; Two players. Split-screen. No slowdown. Marvellous... Only bettered by Four players. Split-screen. etc.

Schism has erupted in the world of the racing game. In the red corner, we have the arcade racer, living by the credo 'floor it' and enjoying adrenaline fuelled racing pleasure. In the blue corner skulks the driving simulation, claiming that realism and authentic handling is the way forward. Can Ridge Racer Type 4 prove that the arcade racer is indeed the paragon of the two styles?

You've Come A Long Way Baby

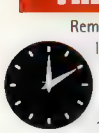
Ridge Racer Type 4 represents a huge progression in the visual department from the antecedent *Ridge Racer* but has the gameplay evolved with it? We reviewed the import version back along, giving it 85%, and can now turn our gaze on the official UK version. The main concern for PAL ports is the slowdown factor, but rest assured that R4 has been well converted and moves as quickly as a nun's first curry. Add to this the fact that there is virtually no scenery pop-up and the package is complete.

As you progress through the game, bonus cars become available; the more tracks you master, the more cars you'll uncover. The speed is barely realised until you access these turbo charged monsters, which will leave you aghast as the tracks almost burn below the chassis; it really is that arcade-fast. The racing mentality is very much 'pedal to the metal', though, with as much success gained from hammering the accelerator as from carefully executed powerslides. That's not to say that there is no place for such manoeuvres, but the car handling occasionally becomes unforgiving, hurtling you off the track. The computer cars are just on the right side of intelligent, objecting to being overtaken, as is understood in a rally championship. Their tactics are both impressive and underhand, and they will swerve to block you with considerable finesse.

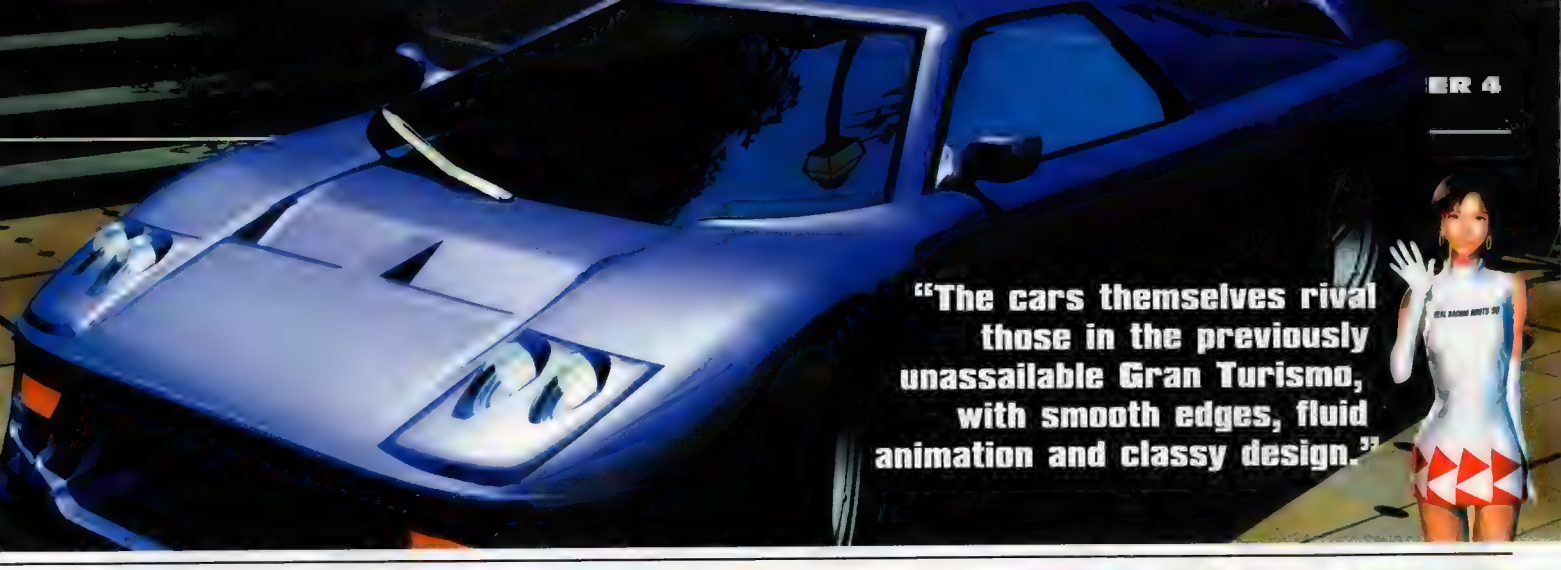


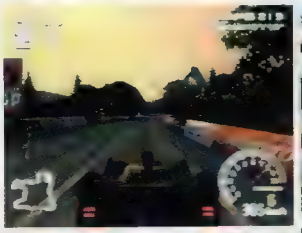
LEFT TO RIGHT: Not content with the simplicity of mere two-player gaming, Ridge Racer Type 4 allows four racers to compete simultaneously via a link. Two players participate on each split screen, allowing for much hectic action.

FIRST TEN MINUTES



Remember how good you thought those lingerie models looked in your mother's home shopping catalogue when you were twelve? This looks just as sweet and, like the models, may cause staining of garments.


"The cars themselves rival those in the previously unassailable Gran Turismo, with smooth edges, fluid animation and classy design."



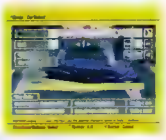
LEFT AND RIGHT: This hidden car is capable of achieving almost twice the speed of the others.

More Life Than A Tramp's Vest

The game itself boasts a lifespan to make Highlander envious, with enough tracks and cars (45 in all, including the superb Pac Man car) to keep interest peaked. Also worthy of note is the fact that the split-screen two player mode is superb, without any discernible slowdown. And the graphics? Only some of the finest ever seen in a PlayStation racing game, my son. The screenshots cannot begin to give an impression of how sumptuous this game looks. The cars themselves rival those in the previously unassailable *Gran Turismo*, with smooth edges, fluid animation and classy design. The tracks make a hostage of the eye, demanding attention. through subtle real-time lighting, looming scenery or the graceful swoop of an overhead helicopter. Incredible given that *Ridge Racer* was the pinnacle of graphical finesse only four years ago.

The disappointing, and somewhat surprising, lack of an arcade option is lessened by the sheer playability of the Grand Prix mode. Four teams are available to join, each offering slightly different cars and bonus cars. Races occur in a series of heats and not in the traditional points scheme of conventional grand prix. In these races, failure to finish in the top three means instant retirement, not to mention suitably patronising comments from your team mates. Also there to be enjoyed is the Time Trial, the chance to burn along each of the tracks in an attempt to smash your best lap record. If this game had the authenticity of *TOCA 2*, it would be THE PlayStation racer. The graphics are unsurpassed and the gameplay is certainly competent. Realism, however, is the vogue of the moment in racing games, and personally, when compared to the more lifelike experience of *TOCA 2*, R4 falls short of the Triple A standard. 6

"...moves as quickly as a nun's first curry..."



LEFT TO RIGHT: Twilight driving has a pleasant ambiance to it, tearing up to tarmac while the sky reddens and fades away to black; night driving, on the other hand, is far more red-light zone.

COMPETITION

GRAN TURISMO

The flagship racer from Sony, boasting enough to keep a small continent amused.

96%

TOCA 2

The emphasis is on real-time car physics. Will keep you occupied if the controls don't infuriate.

95%

STATION

+ Sure is a pretty looker, as my cousin Jonas used to say. Then again, he wrestled pigs.

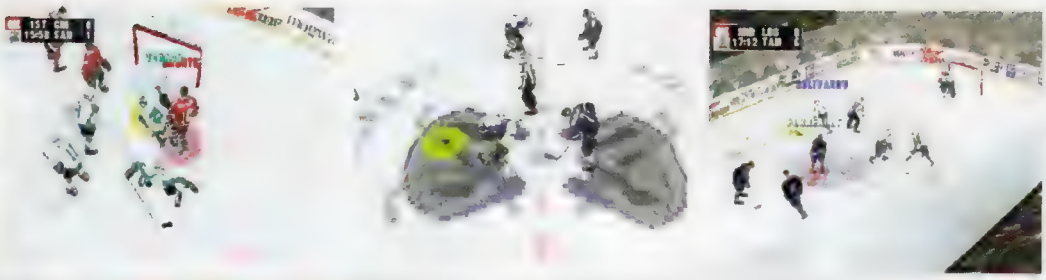
− Gee Ma, another derivative and trite racing title with the tendentious aim of blatantly cashing in.

We can make room on the sofa of our hearts for RR4. Looks exquisite and plays well too.

OUT OF 100

84

Rated by Nick White



ACTUA ICE HOCKEY 2

PUBLISHER: Gremlin **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Sports Sim
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-4 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Multi-tap

FIRST TEN MINUTES

'What the hell's going on?' will succinctly encapsulate the initial reaction. When you find a suitable camera angle the match becomes easier to observe.

COMPETITION

ACTUA ICE HOCKEY
Decidedly average, not through any fault of its own, by other equally prosaic ice hockey games.
67%

NHL OPEN ICE
With the competent *Actua*, games like this should hang their helmeted heads in shame.
50%

STATION

+ All the velocity and full body contact of the real sport. Like travelling on the rush-hour tubes.

– Like Pamela Anderson's chest, it may be pleasing to the eye, but we've seen it all before.

It may be trite, but Actua Ice Hockey 2 perseveres – an ideal first ice hockey game.

OUT OF 100
76

Rated by Nick White

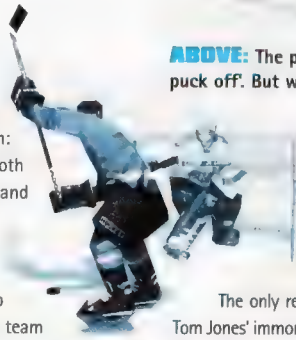
The ice is hard and so are the players. Pad up for a full-speed ruck with a puck.

When you honestly consider the concept of ice hockey, it seems draconian and primeval: men propel themselves along a surface they have no particular grip upon and run the definite risk of having their genital area acquainted with a fast moving rubber disc. And the Americans thrive on it, which may perhaps explain something. On loading the game, head straight to the menu and you'll uncover a host of options, enough to appease even the most hardcore of ice hockey fans. You can tweak it down to the smallest iota you want, from passing accuracy to puck size, which lends a professional and informed feel to the proceedings.

ABOVE: The pun was inevitable: 'this is where the players puck off'. But we decided to print it anyway...

On Frozen Pond

In such an homogeneous ice hockey game market, gameplay and realism are two crux factors to distance a title from the competition: Actua Ice Hockey 2 stands triumphant in both respects with the play being both fluid and imaginative. Also reassuring is that the opponent AI is of a high calibre, making for some rapid decision making on your behalf.



Hockey connoisseurs will delve directly into the league, playing a set fixture and trading team members as if they were football cards. A single exhibition match also begs to be played, offering a more mindless, yet amusing, arcade-style match, an open invitation to bludgeon team members both friendly and opposing. The players themselves may have a few rough polygonal edges but the lifelike manner in which they move more than compensates for any graphical shortcomings. Any potential camera problems can be alleviated as there are twelve angles to view from.

The only real flaw with this game is that best expressed by Tom Jones' immortal lines 'What's new, pussycat?'. The answer is 'not much, really.' If you already own an ice hockey game, chances are you can live without this one unless the prospect of updated players and small game improvements really mean that much to you.

"...the opponent AI is of a high calibre, making for some rapid decision making..."

KKND KROSSFIRE

PUBLISHER: Infogrames **DEVELOPER:** Melbourne House **RELEASE DATE:** March **GAME TYPE:** Realtime Strategy
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

Great! The new *Command & Conquer* sequel has finally arrived. Except that it hasn't, it's another clone. Sorry...

LEFT TO RIGHT: Observe as your friend lovingly establishes a small colony, then, still smiling, obliterate it; if all else fails, go straight for the jugular and hit the enemy base full on, a dangerous tactics which might just work.

To keep it afloat in an increasingly hostile market, the humble PlayStation needs genre-defining titles, not simple re-hashes of what has been before. Can we consider KKND Krossfire as a game in its own right, or is it a simple case of desecrating the altar of the divine *Command & Conquer*? The plot is the oft-told tale of nuclear war, the splitting of humanity into three disparate factions and the battle for global supremacy.

Three legions of combatants are yours to master: the Survivors (humans) the Evolved (mutants) and Series 9 (cyborgs). The ostensible goal of each mission is to eradicate any enemy faction present, gaining control of the area. This is where the strategy comes into play, leaving you to choose a direct attack or a stealthy encroach.

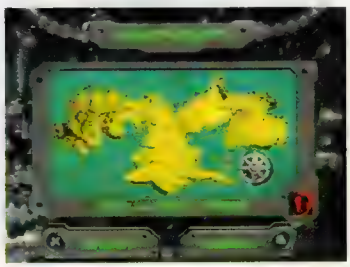
Well Oil Be

As *C&C* veterans will be aware, the first priority will be to build a base and fortifications, opening up a wealth of construction options and leaving you free to build power stations, barracks and machine shops, not to mention a plethora of vehicles and foot troops. All this building costs serious currency, which is where oil mining becomes invaluable. Attempting to lead a full scale offensive as well as harvest black gold for money and defend vital oil installations rapidly becomes a familiar function of the gameplay. Controlling troops and vehicles is an easy task thanks to the fairly intuitive intelligence of the game. Troops can be ordered to stand ground, directly attack the enemy base or gun for the nearest enemy to them.

With 45 missions in total and a split-screen two player mode, KKND Krossfire will certainly pass the hours. Given that the PlayStation is a powerful console, though, how can graphics this shoddy be excused? The FMV is certainly impressive, but the in-game looks hark to Megadrive rather than a 32bit machine.

"...the intuitive control system means troops can be ordered to stand ground, attack a base or charge the nearest target"

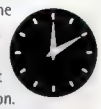
ABOVE: Jesus, this guy gives Mr Potato Head a challenge in the ugly stakes.

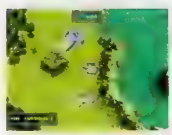


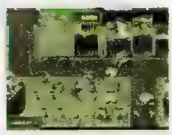
ABOVE: Virgin territory awaits the roll-out of your military hardware.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Don't be fooled by the sumptuous introduction and mission briefings as the graphics deteriorate hereafter. After some time wrestling with the control system, you'll relax into it like a post-apocalyptic cushion.







COMPETITION

C&C: RETALIATION
The perfect war game, blending strategy and action. Essential buy.

DARK OMEN
C&C has a nasty encounter with fantasy RPG. Usual gameplay with Orcish twist.

STATION

+ Can be very engrossing with easy to use and intelligent gameplay options.

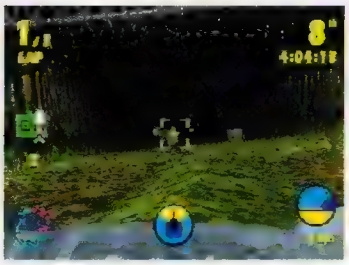
− Not really much of an innovation in terms of gameplay or visuals – can look as rough as a badgers arse

Fans of the genre will warm to this more than the casual *Command & Conquer* player.

OUT OF 100

72

Rated by Nick White



TANK RACER

PUBLISHER: Grolier Interactive **DEVELOPER:** Glass Ghost **RELEASE DATE:** Out now
GAME TYPE: Driving **NO OF PLAYERS:** 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

WEAPON TANK-TICS

The average tank has a resoundingly dull assortment of weapons, ranging from shells to, erm, shells. Tank Racer offers a quality arsenal that even Bond would envy. Another tank blocking your way? Hit them with alien abduction. Perhaps Sir would prefer to lay some mines, use the shield or lovingly fire a concussion shell and spin opponents off.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

You'll be drawn in by hi-res graphics, speed and lack of pop-up. Then you'll indulge in wholesale devastation, letting the fun really begin. When you splat your first cow, you'll be hooked.

Employing tanks to destroy public property is both dangerous and antisocial, yet strangely gratifying with it. Get cow crushing!

Life, on the whole, is full of obstacles. Fences, municipal buildings and cows; all these things exist to hinder you. Tank Racer offers you the chance to exact some vicarious revenge, allowing you to SMASH that fence, DEMOLISH that small building and FLATTEN that grazing bovine victim. Yep, Tank Racer lets you pulverise cows as a natural consequence of the high octane thrills – that'll curb their spontaneous defecation antics and endless cud chewing.

The concept of speed and the humble tank are not usually considered in the same breath. In reality, tanks shuffle along like a decrepit pensioner making his way to the bingo hall, Tank Racer raises a mocking middle finger to reality and lets the tanks hurtle along at a fair old pace. Flora and fauna are about to get a new tank-track tattoo!

For a cumbersome behemoth, the tank you control is surprisingly lithe, handling well both on tarmac and off. However, the temptation is to disregard any nuances of driving finesse and simply crush, flatten or raze anything in your immediate path, making the game more akin to the impending *Carmageddon* than a serious racing sim. As you learn the tracks though, you'll soon be able to leave a trail of desolation *and* make first place. The controls are impressively intuitive too, allowing you to hang a tight corner and rotate the turret with ease and *savoir-faire*.

Enraged Racer

One particularly pleasing feature is the ability to rotate the turret as you drive. Should another tank have the gall and stupidity to attempt to overtake, do some taking of your own and take them

LEFT TO RIGHT: One minute this unwary cop was stuffing doughnuts, the next instant he was flatter than PaRappa; the two-player mode is an exercise in dexterity, with some sharp turret handling called for.

"The deathmatch is a fraught experience full of veering turns and harsh language..."

BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: Other road users are an aggravation. Get outta my way or I'm gonna shove. With napalm; you could always circumnavigate this building, but simply decimating it is a much easier prospect.

out as they creep past on the inside. A simple touch of the shoulder pad will rotate the turret to face your foe, leaving you free to let loose with the standard gun or weapon power-up, taking them out of the equation. Power-ups litter the track, ranging from the standard speed boosts to the more exotic alien abductions (see the boxout for more details).

"As you learn the tracks you'll soon be able to leave a trail of desolation and make first place..."

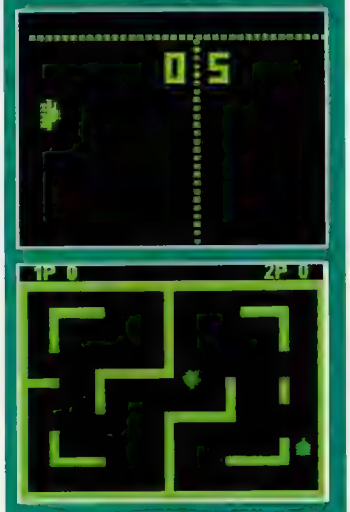
Some PlayStation racing games sacrifice graphical beauty for speed, looking rough but verily speeding along. Tank Racer finds an ideal compromise in this respect, with lush visuals and enough speed to keep the game vibrant and exciting. The frame rate is also pleasingly nippy and the explosions look incandescent without distracting the attention from the task at hand.

Turrets Syndrome

Games have become a competitive experience these days and Tank Racer does not disappoint on the multiplayer front. Accost a friend and you can enjoy the split-screen tracks available, which are either race or battle focused. The two-player mode runs as smoothly as the single player, with a wealth of weapons littering the track. The deathmatch is a fraught experience full of veering turns and harsh language as you speed past your foe, rotate your turret and nuke 'em before they even know what hit them, let alone where the hell you suddenly appeared from.

Tank Racer may be engaging but does it have the lifespan of a mayfly or the Queen Mother? There are 22 tracks and enough hidden extras to keep you engaged for quite some time, although whether you deem it worth the effort is another question. Possibly the fundamental flaw with the game is that it attempts to integrate two genres into one game, making it a hodge-podge of a fairly decent racing game as well as a fairly decent shoot 'em-up. It could have been a shoddy title, but Tank Racer integrates the two styles well, leaving you free to burn some tank track, indulge in wanton destruction and mercilessly slaughter cows like a BSE cull.

SECRETS SERVICE



As is commonplace these days, continual play rewards the tenacious player with extra options, weapons or tracks. Tank Racer offers bonus tanks packing more speed and manoeuvrability and there are some amusing sub-games that give classic games a tank-type slant, such as Ping (Pong with tanks) and Space Tank (Asteroids with a tank for a ship).

COMPETITION

DODGEM ARENA

Not the passive funfair ride of unsullied youth, these enjoy creating pyrotechnic displays.

72%

WIPEOUT 2097

Dazzling zero-G racer with bangin' soundtrack and weapons. Still one of the PSX's finest hours.

93%

STATION

+ Intense deathmatch levels and the incredible cow crushing abilities!

– Another racing game, with a few frills. Tank handling may frustrate speed freaks.

Tanks, disregard for communal property and some frantic two-player action.

OUT OF 100

82

Rated by Nick White

WARZONE 2100

PUBLISHER: Eidos **DEVELOPER:** Pumpkin Studios **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Realtime Strategy
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog, Mouse

FULL METAL PRACTICE

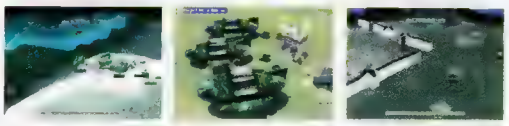
The [illegible] humanity [illegible] should [illegible] you'll need to

Be the salvation of post-apocalyptic Earth using only a joypad and a user-friendly interface. And tanks.

LEFT TO RIGHT: An enemy base just waiting to be levelled. Send in the automatons of destruction; the tank design screen; easy to use and replete with accessories for the well dressed armoured vehicle.

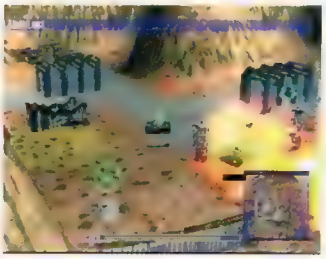
Humanity has a severe lesson to learn before it can evolve and realise its true potential; nuclear weapons, on the whole, can cause some upset. Upset such as the genocide of the majority of the global population and grotesque mutations in the beleaguered survivors. Warzone 2100, like so many before, hypothesises such a future, a future where nuclear devastation has killed billions, a devastation called The Collapse. You must assume a role in The Project, an altruistic faction of survivors struggling for survival and salvaging technology and resources from before The Collapse for the greater good. Three diverse campaigns and over 40 missions await you.

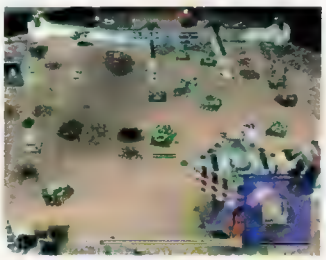
> **"...create any derivation of tank you desire, as long as you have the appropriate technologies..."**



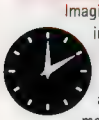
Turn It, Baby

Previous games of this ilk have settled for a traditional 'top down' approach, making for occasionally irksome play as you struggle to discern exactly what is happening on screen. Traversing the terrain and making attacks is a simple business in Warzone 2100 as you can rotate the view through 360°, zoom in and out and tilt it up and down, allowing you to make a full reconnaissance of an enemy base before you launch an assault upon it. With the analogue pad, rotating the terrain is easily integrated into the gameplay with a mere nudge of the right stick. Other features also make gameplay easier, such as quick screen navigation, the ability to set factories to constant production and the option to choose where you

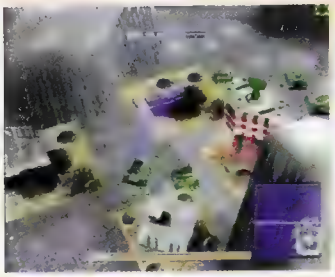
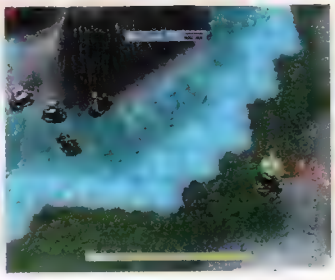
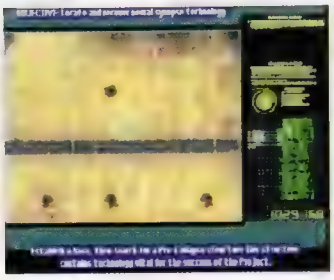




FIRST TEN MINUTES



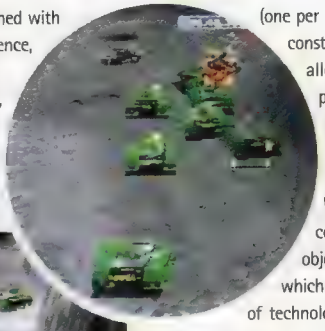
Imagine *C&C*. Improve the graphics and integrate a fully rotatable 3D engine. Now add a plethora of customisable vehicles and some intense strategic action. Your first ten minutes will merge into hours, then hazily into days.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Construct a base as soon as you can, it's your stronghold; water can be a problem for land based tanks. They sink. Funny, that; detailed briefings are a prefix to each mission, making all objectives clear.

want newly manufactured units delivered. Combined with the sumptuous graphics that add to the experience, Warzone 2100 is a very tidy package indeed.

As is almost mandatory in games of this breed, you begin with the establishment of a fortified base. However, in Warzone 2100, you remain with the same base for the duration of each campaign, meaning that you only have to build three bases (one per campaign) should you choose to. The range of construction options the game offers is colossal, allowing you access to such features as production, research, command and defence to name a few. The missions themselves are an evolution from the perpetual routine of building a base and attacking the enemy. Warzone 2100 is a quest for resources as well as conquest. Often missions will have the primary objective of locating and recovering artefacts with which you can expand and improve your own scope of technologies and weapons, with research playing an integral role in the game. With over four hundred technologies to research, this may take some time. Warzone 2100 is linear insofar as the mission structure follows a set path, you are able to tackle them in multifarious ways, though, via the superb tank creation system.



Frankenstein Tankenstein

Warzone 2100 allows you to create any derivation of tank you desire, as long as you have researched the necessary technologies. Think of it as a form of warfare-based Lego and you'll have an accurate picture. You can sculpt a tank according to your particular strategic plan, selecting propulsion system, body and weapons, each of which have many types to choose from.

Having lovingly constructed an armada of tanks to your specifications, the last eventuality you want to witness is seeing them utterly obliterated. You must therefore issue them with appropriate orders, either individually or in one of four allocatable groups, ranging from fire at will, stand guard, attack most dangerous target and retreat at a given level of damage. This confers the tactician with the ability to issue orders to one battalion and focus on another aspect of the game, confident that the tanks will follow their orders via the remarkable AI the game possesses. Warzone 2100 is an essential purchase for the strategy fanatic, veering perilously close to knocking *Command and Conquer* from its lofty perch.

COMPETITION

COMMAND & CONQUER
The inevitable comparison hangs its head in shame at the 3D interface on offer.

WARGAMES
Similar to the section of *Warzone 2100* that sees you controlling an individual unit.

STATION

Finally a fresh interpretation of the *C&C* genre! Innovative and addictive, will have you hooked.

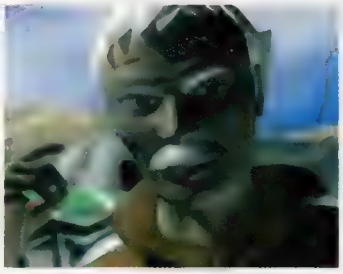
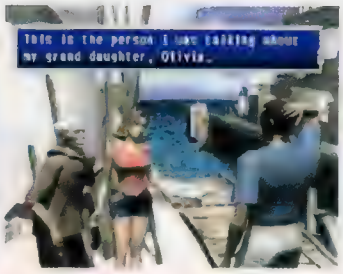
Cynics will claim that this is trite and uninspired. It may be derivative, but so is *Star Wars*.

Depth, beauty, lasting appeal – like a symbiosis of Kate Winslet and Carol Vorderman. Nice.

OUT OF 100

92

Rated by Nick White

DIVER'S DREAM

PUBLISHER: Konami **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Coustea 'em-up/RPG
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Exploration of the undersea world is initially a captivating experience, reinforced with some beautiful music. Then you discover that the 'cute' fish are poisonous and air supplies are limited, soiling the calm.

LEFT: Well, hello my sweet. Perhaps later you could adjust my snorkel?

COMPETITION

TREASURES OF THE DEEP
The forerunner to *Diver's Dream*, spiced up with more weapons and some great minisubs.
81%

FLUID
Truly bizarre game involving a dolphin bent on making music. Underwater.
70%

STATION

Very soothing to play. Cheaper than a tropical aquarium and a lot more fun than waiting at the dentist.

Frustrating, tar-like controls and levels which are perhaps too similar.

Would be improved by more freedom of movement, and less repetitive missions.

OUT OF 100
76

Rated by Nick White

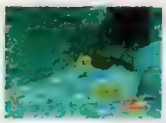
At last, a way to relax that has nothing to do with either narcotics or alcohol.

Konami, smug after the release of *Metal Gear Solid* in the UK, can now take a chance on releasing more obscure titles, of which *Diver's Dream* is a prime example. A curious hybrid of RPG and *Tomb Raider*-esque underwater exploration, you play an aquatic hero, Jean, on his quest to retrieve a job lot of treasure from a sunken wreck, leaving him able to afford a huge piss-up afterwards.

Partly, this is due to very sluggish controls, which leave you prone to attack. Some say that this reflects the true Jacques Cousteau experience, but it frustrates rather than delights.

Upon returning to town, the RPG slant becomes obvious and Jean interacts with the island folk who ask him to dive for various reasons and cash incentives. Apart from fulfilling your mission criteria, you can salvage various items strewn along the sea bed, which can be sold for hard cash, allowing you to upgrade your wetsuit, air tank and harpoon gun. Some of the diving missions have a reward attached, such as killing a Jaws-like carnivorous shark, giving you other ways to raise some wonga.

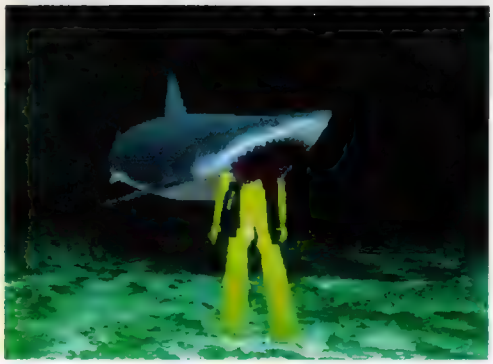
"Somewhat similar to excessive exposure to Richard and Judy, it's relaxing stuff."



Water, Water Everywhere...

The game is split into two sections, land and sea. The moment you begin your first dive, waves of calm and serenity will envelop you. Somewhat similar to excessive exposure to *Richard and Judy*, it's relaxing stuff. The diving sections, whilst not being graphical masterpieces, are easy on the eyes as you watch the fish lazily drift around. It's after this ambient bliss has subsided that you discover that all is not perfect in the deep blue under.

This may have some similarity to the sub-aquatic parts of the *Tomb Raider* games, but where they were packed with variety, Diver's Dream can be a touch repetitive, exploring cave after cave with only a harpoon gun for protection. It's an enjoyable experience, but you might be just as well off lying in the bath with a snorkel on, surrounded by novelty fish.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: In the levels where you have no tanks, searching out air pockets is a vital objective; Shaaaark! Pray that this one hates the taste of rubber more than it likes the taste of diver...

TRAP RUNNER

PUBLISHER: Konami **DEVELOPER:** Racdym **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Puzzle/Strategy
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

In the world of Trap Runner, there are much more dangerous things on the streets than the occasional dog turd...

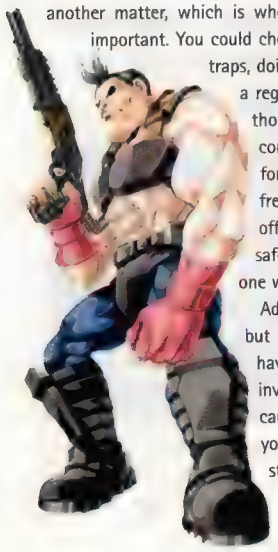
LEFT AND RIGHT: Like all good games, you can enjoy the pained murder of friends thanks to a split-screen two player mode; stealth mode turns your line of sight blue, revealing traps set in your path, but slowing you down considerably.

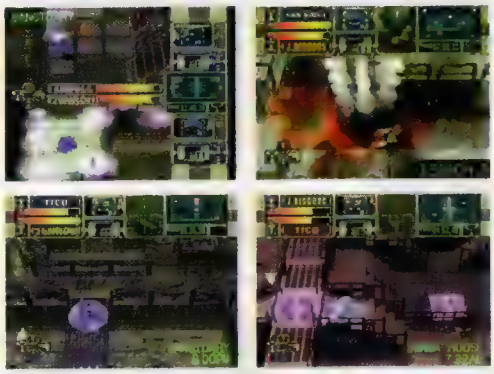
One thing that makes a game great is its ability to relieve stress. *Doom*, for example, fulfilled the criteria well. After a taxing day at the office/sauna/Jobcentre, the wholesale massacre of *Doom* really eased the tension as you imagined that imp to be the irritating wanker ahead in the queue, just before hitting it with a rocket in the chest. Trap Runner offers the same potential experience.

Mine Your Step

The aim is to destroy your foe with traps, and anybody who can recall *Spy vs Spy* from MAD magazine will immediately get the idea. How you decide to humiliate and cripple your nemesis is another matter, which is where individual strategy becomes important. You could choose to lay a series of individual traps, doing small amounts of damage on a regular basis. For the real thrill-kill, though, you need a deadly trap combo. Some work well in unison; for example try using a pit trap to freeze your enemy and then letting off several remote mines from a safe distance, sending them on a one way trip to hell.

Adding to the strategy is the small but fatally important fact that traps have an annoying habit of becoming invisible when you lay them. You can see your own, but not those of your rival. Each character has a stealth mode though, in which they can detect and disable enemy traps, some of which pack a bigger punch than Lennox Lewis!





"For the real thrill-kill you need a deadly trap combo..."

One bone of contention with this game is its lack of speed. Trap Runner should play like a kung fu movie; fast paced and full of action. In practice, it's just a matter of laying traps and waiting for the enemy to blunder into them. On the topic of traps, the game needs more of them as the variety simply isn't there, making for a lack of long-term interest.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

The concept of running around an arena laying traps may sound tedious, but when you see foe caught in your handiwork, sadistic glee takes over.

WATCH YOUR STEP

The traps available range from the explosive to the worryingly pointless. Pointless, that is, until you use them as a vital part of a combo. Some of the traps include two types of mine: basic proximity and remote which can be triggered manually. The pit trap can envelop the foe in the floor and the poison gas trap does exactly what it says on the tin.

COMPETITION

POY POY
Small Jap manga kids go berserk and fling all manner of things at each other.

BLAST CHAMBER
Tilt a room, grab bombs and try to keep your body parts in some physiological order.

STATION

+ Interesting concept for a game, successful trap combos are hugely satisfying to witness.

− Can become repetitive and really needs a greater number of traps.

Rather like daytime TV, great, but will drive you on to something more interesting.

OUT OF 100 **75**

Rated by Nick White

T'AI FU

PUBLISHER: Activision **DEVELOPER:** Dreamworks Interactive **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Arcade beat 'em–up
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

FIRST TEN MINUTES

A muted training level leads into some rudimentary snake-strangling, and while the cut scenes are entertaining they have an unnecessary degree of roughness.

I REALLY LOVE YOUR TIGER FEET

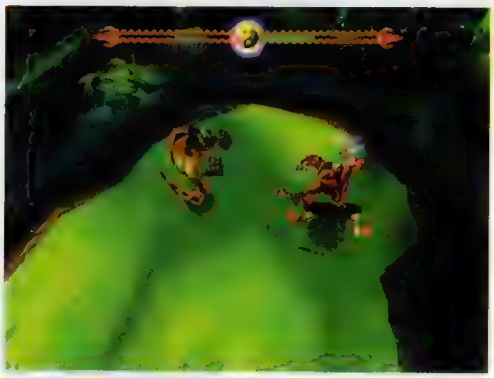
A

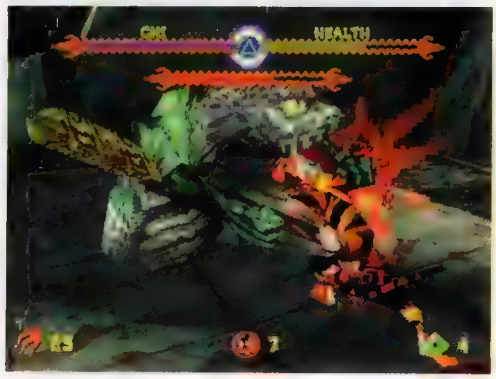
SHERE KHAN

TONY THE TIGER

THE TIGER FROM THE ESSO COMMERCIAL

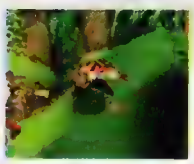
You're a tiger! Grrrr! Cross an overdose of Frosties and some tea bags and what do you get?



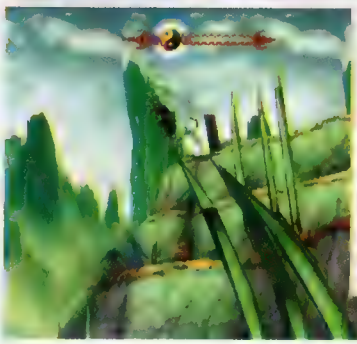


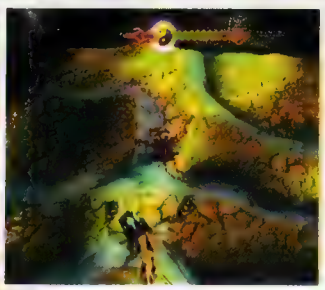
LEFT TO RIGHT: Squaring up against a serpentine creature with disproportionately big fists, T'ai prepares for a hard hitting ch'i attack with a crack of his knuckles; an end-of-level guardian puts the bite down on our striped titan.

If ever there was a game style that has fallen out of fashion it's the free-roaming arcade beat 'em-up. Back in the eighties the likes of *Double Dragon* ruled arcades and home systems alike, perennially scrolling sideways into yet more hordes of punch-drunk bad guys. However in the less naive era of the PlayStation the genre has drifted out of favour, with either dedicated exploration or fighting games disentwining the two elements into purist forms, arguably for the better. Nonetheless every so often a publisher has a stab at updating the reliable if limited action it provides (as seen recently in Eidos' *Ninja*), and this time it's the turn of Activision to take the rugged old genre out for a spin.



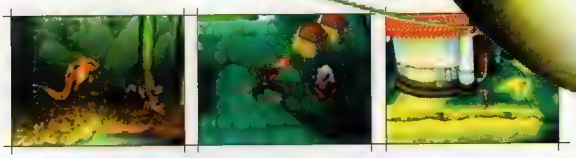
"Gory blood splatters accompany successful hits, while a few fairly run-of-the-mill sparkly discharge effects garnish his magical moments..."



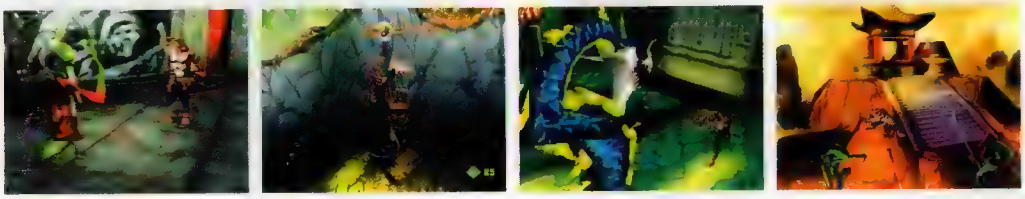


LEFT: Bouncing high on a trampoline-like bamboo mat T'ai flies up gracefully into the picturesque evening sky.

"Our hero in this tale is T'ai Fu, a musclebound martial artist feline who is the only survivor of the mysterious and age-old Tiger Clan."



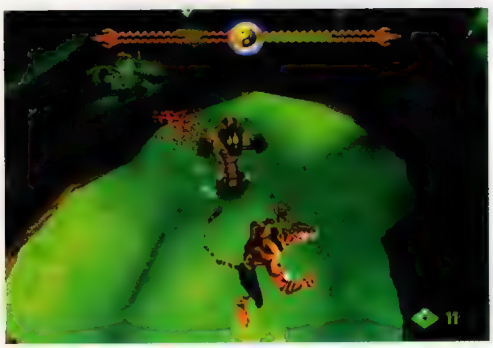
BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: This insectoid wise man confers knowledge of new techniques at the Tiger Clan Temple; an elegant leaping somersault move can inflict damage whilst keeping the fanged hero out of reach from attack; this blue-skinned dragon is T'ai's villanious arch-enemy; the feline warrior only pauses to let a slinky run down the temple steps.



Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright...

The plot concerns a mythical ancient China in which beasts walk and talk like men, spouting the odd profundity and admiring the willowy scenery. Our hero in this tale is T'ai Fu, a musclebound martial artist feline who is the only survivor of the mysterious and age-old Tiger Clan. Unjustifiably blamed for the slaying of his adopted teachers (the surely celibate Panda Monks) he must find the abandoned Temple of his ancestors to discover where his destiny lies and how to clear himself of dishonour. It goes without saying the journey involves great peril and risk of physical harm, but the stripey orange bloke is well up to the task with his kung fu skills, er, cat-like reflexes and mystical energy channelling abilities.

Alongside his standard clawing attack T'ai can link together a number of combinations (including the Monkey Bounce and Leopard Spin moves), block and then perform a basic counter attack or grab an opponent and chuck them, which is especially useful for hoying troublesome creatures over the edge of a cliff. On top of that he can also call upon internal ch'i power and direct it in aggressive ways, either via direct blasts or radial waves that can help greatly if surrounded.



Out to get T'ai's furry behind are an army of vicious cobras, cranes and various chimerical creatures that are straight from Chinese mythology and wouldn't look out of place on an ornamental plate. These possess fairly primary school levels of AI and need only rudimentary tactics applied to them en large, with a greater risk to the tiger's health coming from unwittingly blundering off a bottomless precipice whilst manoeuvring for position.

Gory blood splatters accompany successful hits, while a few fairly run-of-the-mill sparkly discharge effects garnish his magical moments. It's all quite pleasant, if a touch, well, *polite* for the ravenous visual appetites of today, hungry for yet more outlandishness.

Scars And Stripes

Unfortunately T'ai Fu is quite badly let down in its graphical aspects by the fairly obvious technical corner cutting that has occurred and ensuingly spoiled the otherwise alluring Mandarin look of the game. Polygon sorting errors mean that often you'll get inconveniently obscured behind scenery, while completing a level is usually greeted by the screen suddenly freezing and a 'loading' sign appearing. This rubs off a bit too much atmosphere for comfort and detracts from what is an agreeable character both to look at and play as, although the annoying teenage Yankee accent the programmers decided to give the mighty warrior doesn't have anywhere near enough heroic gravitas.

The gameplay is reassuringly familiar but lacks an edge of urgency, with the simplest of approaches often proving more effective than utilising the time-sapping combo moves. Like most games in this form T'ai Fu is entertaining for an initial period but fails to keep the momentum going, hampered by a coin-op heritage that doesn't lend itself to creating a lasting appeal in spite of the compelling scenario.

T'AI FIGHTER

T'ai Fu is the most advanced martial arts game that has come our way on the Nintendo 64. Until now all the [illegible] have been [illegible] and the [illegible] have been [illegible] the powers of [illegible].

COMPETITION

NINJA

A very close cousin with a similar ambience, general approach, and same lack of ambition.

70%

FIGHTING FORCE

Another Core game, closer to the eighties coin-op style. Best if someone else bought it.

45%

STATION

+ Pleasant tinkling atmosphere with a smart lead character, cranially undemanding.

− A touch spartan in gameplay terms, graphically glitchy from certain angles.

A pleasant enough diversion for a few hours but is missing some vital *jouissance* and polish.

OUT OF 100

72

Rated by Christian Slater

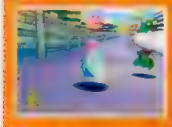
BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE

PUBLISHER: Virgin **DEVELOPER:** Hudson **RELEASE DATE:** 21st May **GAME TYPE:** Racing
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Without a doubt you'll spend this time comparing the game to *Mario Kart*, or *Pen Pen Triathlon* on the Dreamcast. The novelty of racing dinosaurs will patch over any shortfalls. For a while, at least.

JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE



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COMPETITION

MICRO MACHINES V3
The reigning monarch of 'novelty' racing games, made so by a superlative four-player mode.

VIGILANTE 8
Funk-tastic game with the emphasis more on combat then driving. Thankfully no cute dinosaurs.

STATION

Will appease Bomberman fans as exploding your friends is always amusing and never fails to delight.

Derivative and uninspiring, on the whole let down by bad handling physics.

Would make a good party game, but naked twister is much more fun.

OUT OF 100
68

Rated by Nick White

Ever felt the urge to mount caricature dinosaurs and hurl bombs at your friends? Well, now's your chance.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Player two looks on smugly as player one decides to spontaneously combust; for a small guy, that's a huge bomb. Size obviously does matter.

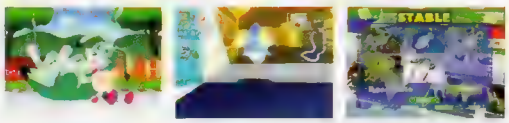
It's very much *en vogue* these days to take established (and very marketable) characters and slap them into any old game, simply to sell a few more units. And whilst this seems a respectable marketing ploy, it can also make for crap games. Apparently Virgin believe that there is room in our hearts, as well as our wallets, for that loveable pyromaniac Bomberman.

Bomb That Bitch Up

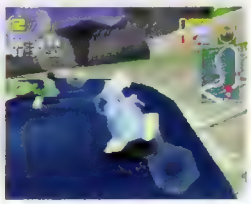
The purpose of the races is financial: win races to win cash, with which you can pay entry to more exclusive races with a grander purse available. Not only that, but the monetary gain can be invested in a new racing beastie. One flaw however is the lack of said dinos to purchase, with only two main varieties: Tirra and Louie. The improved dinos offer little else bar greater speed and a new paint job. Similarly there is a notable lack of tracks, a humble six in total, which are the same for both single and two-player games.

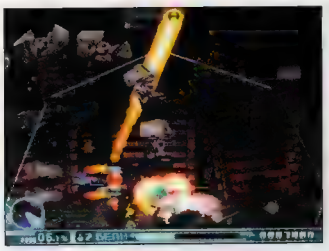
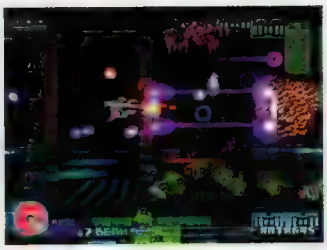
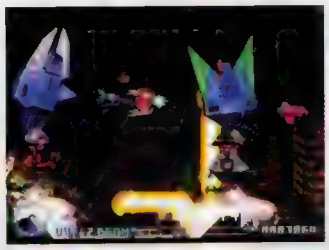
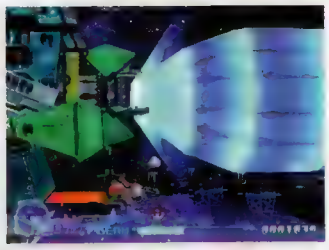
Violence is always a redemptive factor in games and Bomberman Fantasy Race happily fulfils the sadism quota. Bombermen may be adorable but they will happily torch any individual in their way, making them into cuddly Goodfellas, and many a race can be salvaged by carefully flinging a well aimed bomb into the crowd ahead, taking them out and leaving you to steal first place. Satisfying in the extreme. With weapons ranging from standard bombs, power bombs and the power glove, races can get very messy indeed, which is a positive boon in two-player split screen games.

"Like cuddly Goodfellas, Bombermen will happily torch anything in their way..."



Sadly, though, whilst the basic look of the graphics can be excused as maintaining that original Bomberman charm, the dino handling is a anachronistic farce. Unforgivably sluggish and treacle-like, Bomberman Fantasy Race is a classic example of 'could do better'; a few good ideas poorly implemented. S



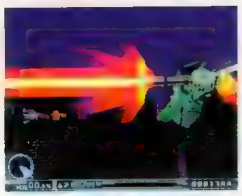





R-TYPE DELTA

PUBLISHER: Sony **DEVELOPER:** Irem **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Shoot 'em-up
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

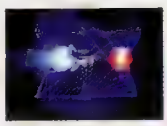
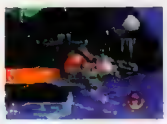
Like a bad curry, the evil Bydo Empire won't stay down. Time to pit one ship against the masses and despatch some violent justice.

Some things in life scream out for a makeover. Cilla Black, for example, could certainly use one. *R-Type* needed a makeover and the gods have heard our plea. The slightly older gamer will join me in getting misty-eyed with rose tinged nostalgia at the very mention of *R-Type*. Well, *R-Type* is back, resplendent with a fresh coat of 3D polygon paint. We reviewed the import version in issue 5, giving it a venerable 91%. The UK version is just as superb.



LEFT AND RIGHT: That is a criminal case of flatulence. Die, polluter!

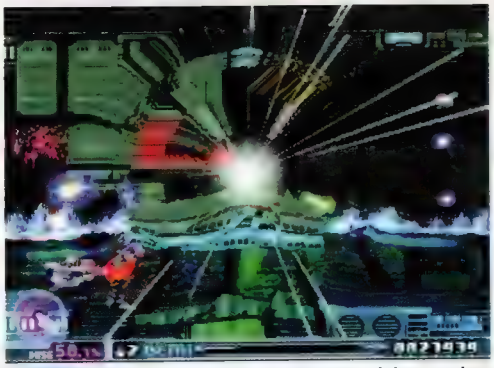
"Guns maketh the shoot 'em-up and R-Type Delta is a made game..."

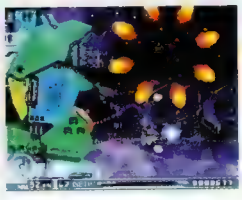
Mad For It, R-Kid

The primary thing to grasp one's attention is the sheer scale and ingenuity of the enemy ships. Ranging from the mechanical to the biological, you will want to keep playing simply to see what other monstrosities lie in wait. R-Type Delta is not afraid to plunge you in at the deep end, with several vast behemoth craft on the first level alone. Strategy is something of an anomaly in a shoot 'em-up, yet the brain is just as vital as the trigger finger when confronted by craft many times the size of yours. The trick is analysing the weak points of the fuselage and structuring an attack accordingly. The gameplay development may be linear, with the same patterns every level, but it allows players to progress a little more each time they play, a perfect learning curve.

Guns maketh the shoot 'em-up and R-Type Delta is a made game, partly due to the ingenious 'Force', which attaches itself to the front or back of your ship and can be detached ahead or behind of you to reach enemies inaccessible by your more pedestrian ordnance. The strategy of the game is further heightened by the fact three types of Force are available, the original, an anchor and a tentacle. When all is said, R-Type Delta is a perfect package, both graphically and gameplay wise. If you buy this game, women will flock to you. Possibly.



ABOVE: The screen shimmers and undulates when powerful weapons are used.



LEFT: This level one snake dominates the entire screen, and it's up to you to stop it!

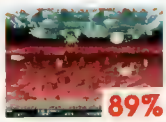
FIRST TEN MINUTES

The first ten minutes will be a blur of activity and iridescent laser fire. You'll be engrossed with the fine art of staying alive and fail to notice all the beautiful graphical touches.

COMPETITION

R-TYPES

Compilation of the first two *R-Type* games. Recommended for the *R-Type* rookie.



EINHÄNDER

Rock hard, eye-blistering blast fest. Slightly less mentally taxing though.

STATION

Carnage, pure and simple; a bull in a china shop with more guns than a guerrilla state.

Some may find it repetitive and frustrating. Strange, strange people. This is R-Type, dammit!

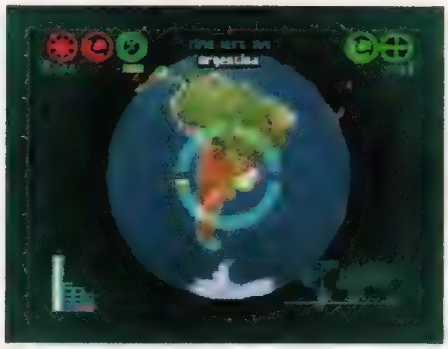
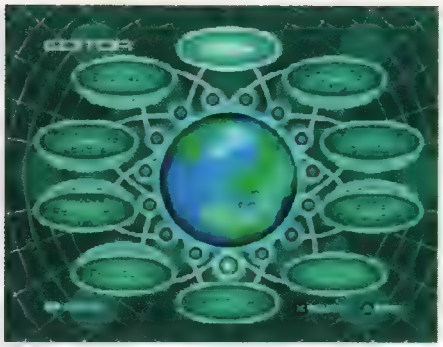
TRIPLE A TITLE

Pure adrenaline on a CD. Hollywood-style explosions and sleepless nights guaranteed.

OUT OF 100

91

Rated by Nick White

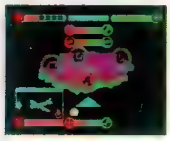



GLOBAL DOMINATION

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis **DEVELOPER:** In–House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Strategy/Bond Shooter
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Analog

FIRST TEN MINUTES

You'll want to pause for the FMV intro before you begin the carnage. Random firing soon gives way to precise strikes when you become adept with the tactical view.



LEFT: Africa receives a napalm injection after a shoddy defence.

COMPETITION

COMMAND & CONQUER
The antecedent of the modern strategy game. Both manually and cerebrally taxing.
89%

MISSILE COMMAND
Almost copyright-infringingly similar to *Global Domination*, and highly frustrating too.
N/A

STATION

A novel interpretation of *Missile Command* with a dash of strategy in the mix.

Turn globe. Shoot. Turn globe. Snoot. Some may find this banal.

Like insomnia, Global Domination will keep you twisting and turning for hours.

OUT OF 100
83

Rated by Nick White

Bomb the French from the comfort of your favourite chair.

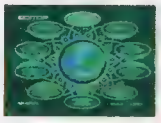
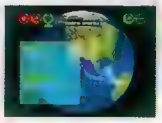
The chances are you'll have seen a Bond film in your time. You may even have seen *Never Say Never Again*. If so, you'll instantly recognise Global Domination as a variant of the after-dinner war game Bond plays, and it's equally as black-tie cool.

You adopt the role of a rookie, recruited by an elite military corps. An elite military corps without press-ups or biscuit related games, incidentally. This outfit has the world at their fingertips, via an holographic interface which becomes the method by which you play the game. You rotate the projected globe and use a mid-screen crosshair to aim and send units or missiles. It may sound a little confusing, but it integrates seamlessly into the frantic pace the game soon adopts.

There is a mission-based structure for play, featuring atmospheric FMV introductions, with the objectives including genocide, defence and strategic disablement of enemy amenities. It is surprisingly easy to play, with globe rotation, weapon selection and use swiftly becoming second nature. Any graphical shortcomings it may have are soon overcome by the sheer playability, and Global Domination is vastly improved by this emphasis on interaction over aesthetics.

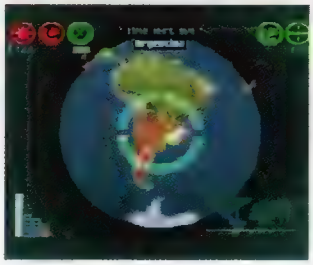
The opening missions are a familiar initiation into the realm of global warfare, and soon escalate into conflicts approaching Armageddon. The later missions will test the resolve of even the most hardcore of strategy gamers as you struggle to defend your outposts whilst co-ordinating a counter strike with missiles, planes and naval units, especially when the mission criteria suddenly change midway through. For Global Domination strays away from the domain of the braindead blasting that has plagued consoles for time immemorial. The strategic locating and execution of attacks is paramount to success; using the tactical display is mandatory for victory.

"Like a hot apple pie from a fast food joint, there is more to this than you first assume."

Anybody coveting a strategy game with some hard paced action will do well to look at this cheeky little title. Like a hot apple pie from a fast food joint, there is more to it than you at first assume. Although Global Domination will never cause third degree burns with a molten filling...

BELOW: Use the tactical display to focus on the defences of the enemy.



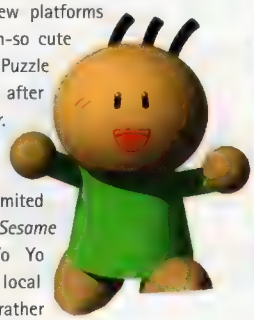
YO YO'S PUZZLE PARK

PUBLISHER: JVC **DEVELOPER:** Irem **RELEASE DATE:** May **GAME TYPE:** Puzzle/Surreal 'em–up
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

Another curious Japanese puzzle game that makes you wonder just exactly what it is they put into the water over there.

LEFT TO RIGHT: The screen tilts and rotates during play. Trippy, maaaan!; Boom! Another evildoing anthropomorphised creature gets theirs; the dragons are annoying thanks to their penchant for eating the bombs.

It appears that theme parks are no longer a safe haven. This has nothing to do blatantly dangerous rides, however. Imagine Alton Towers fused with a heavy dose of narcotics, a few platforms and a legion of nefarious, yet oh-so cute monsters, and you have Yo Yo's Puzzle Park. Not a safe place to linger after dark. Or in the day, for that matter.



Parklife

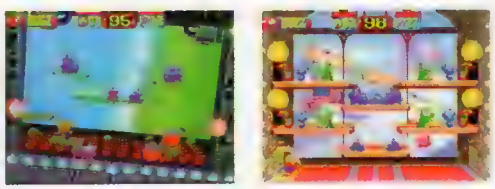
The plot seems to have been vomited forth straight from *Playbus* or *Sesame Street*, with the tyrannical Yo Yo maliciously taking over the local playpark of the people. Sounds rather Marxist, if you ask me. Naturally, your job is to reclaim the means of production, sorry, playpark, and all you have is a party popper for help. Intrigued?

The game takes place over sixty single screen levels, with the purpose being to despatch the creatures resident in each. Each screen has several bombs scattered around it, and you have to detonate them in the vicinity of the beasties. A simple concept, an arduous task.

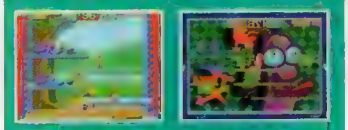
The archaic game style has been rejuvenated with some polygonal spangle, giving each screen a different feel. Some levels even sway and tilt at inopportune moments, such as the series set inside a roller coaster simulator. It made me feel nauseous, anyway. Yo Yo's henchmen are an eclectic bunch, featuring deformed Pac Men, dragons (that swallow the bombs), trapeze-artist bears and cartons of soft drink. I kid you not. The levels are varied enough to maintain interest, adhering to certain themes such as undersea and jungle. Also there for your delectation are various vehicles to convey you around, including a duck, hovercraft and a laser-firing turtle. Yes, turtle. Almost each new screen introduces a new feature, making it a title seriously worth investing in, especially if you have a mate for simultaneous two-player weirdness.

ABOVE: I've never seen such friendly looking bombs before, it's almost a shame to use them...

"A simple concept, an arduous task..."



PARTY POOPER



The use of each screen is simple: explode them critters to kingdom come. The party popper stuns the creatures, and then you have to move the bombs to where the stunned fiends are slumped and frag them into a flaming pyre. Comically amusing is the look of absolute fear on the faces of the bombs before they detonate.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

The factor that really catches you out is how the game toys with expectation. You expect another *Bubble Bobble* emulation, yet find yourself won over by all the innovative touches and fluid gamely.

COMPETITION

BUBBLE BOBBLE
The original non-violent platform game, still very playable, even by modern standards.

POY POY 2
Deranged oddness with individuals seeking to harm each other with a wide array of objects.

STATION

+ Recapture that lost youth with this surprisingly refreshing little game.

– Some may consider it derivative and a bit childish. These people probably enjoy sprouts.

Psychedelic and bizarre, a contrast to the more 'serious' and violent games around.

OUT OF 100
84

Rated by Nick White

MARVEL SUPER HEROES VS. STREETFIGHTER

PUBLISHER: Virgin **DEVELOPER:** Capcom **RELEASE DATE:** May **GAME TYPE:** Beat 'em-up
NO OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £34.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock

FIRST TEN MINUTES

No surprises of any kind, with all the usual age-old *SF* trappings getting trotted out again.

STATION

\+ Hulk Smash! Kicking ass as a superhero can't be sniffed at.

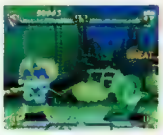
− Same old *SF* but with a few new images bolted on top, that bellowing voiceover...

Surely it's time to decommission this warhorse before it starts embarrassing?

OUT OF 100: **62**

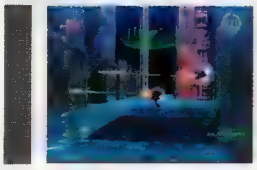
Rated by Christian Slater

ABOVE: Adamantium claws a-flashin' Wolverine closes in for the kill.

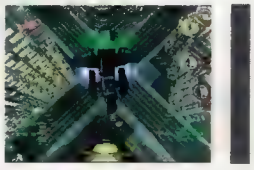


Another month, another slight variation on the *Street Fighter* theme. When will the madness end?

Let's get this straight, my friends. *Street Fighter* has well and truly had its day, and churning out an endless production line of barely different permutations is no way to carry on. This latest offering possesses only minor differences from *X-Men vs Street Fighter* and has obviously come about so Capcom can take as much advantage of the no-doubt expensive Marvel Comics licence as possible. Gameplay-wise it's frozen in 1992 with a rhythm that's more akin to a shoot 'em-up than a fighting game, while the shadow-puppet graphics stare uncaringly in the face of new-fangled rubbish like polygons or smooth frame rates. The addition of Spiderman, the Hulk et al is briefly arousing, but the thrill soon washes away as the limitations of the game reassert themselves. As usual *Street Fighter* fans (who are you?) will lap it up, but surely it's wearing too thin to carry on into the year 2000. S



PLATINUM G-POLICE



PUBLISHER: Psygnosis **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Shoot 'em-up
NO OF PLAYERS: One **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Atmospheric and instantly absorbing action with a dark and interesting ambience which draws you into its midnight world.

STATION

Great visuals and a strong, immersive, storyline. Full of gothic sci-fi imagery. Full of gaming challenge.

Control of craft can be tough, and overall lacks the necessary speed.

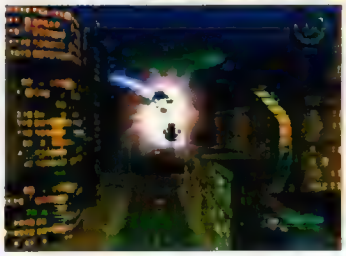
A good mix of science fiction tension and blasting action.

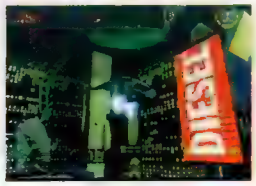
OUT OF 100: **80**

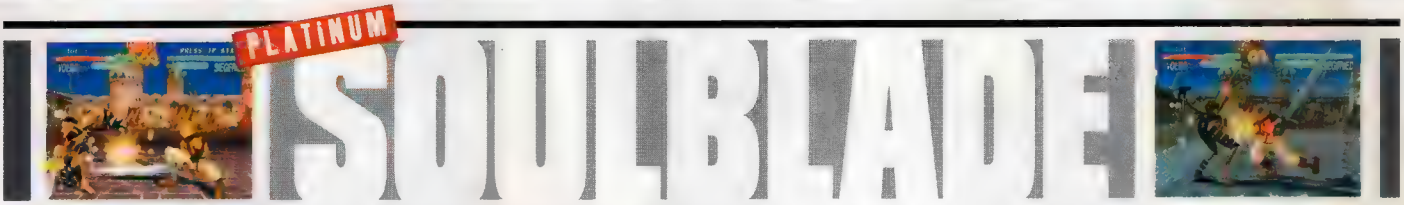
Rated by Kendall Lacey

In the bleak future, who ya gonna call? G-Police.

In a future where the earth has become a dried up wasteland, people begin to head into space to find the necessary resources, but inevitably exploration soon turns to war, leading to the downfall of all the governments of the world. Only the big global companies have the money to continue research, so power falls into their hands, and it is up to the G-Police to keep control, both on the ground and in the skies above the enclosed cities. Following the death of your sister, you sign up to the force to try and find the truth. The smooth graphics and detailed storyline pull you into this claustrophobic world and the game is an amalgam of flight simulator and arcade blaster. You soon learn to trust no one and as you take better control of the city, the plot thickens. Shoot 'em-up fans will be happy with their arsenal of rockets, cannons and missiles whereas adventure fans will get drawn into the story. If you fancy yourself as Harrison Ford in *Blade Runner* then this is a game for you. Recommended. S







PUBLISHER: Namco **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now **GAME TYPE:** Beat 'em-up
NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 **PRICE:** £19.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

Freaks, viragos and huge weapons. Fight on!

ABOVE: Bitch fight! Go on, pull her hair!

The beat 'em-up genre feels somewhat oppressive these days with the virtue of *Tekken* streaming from the mouth of every combat enthusiast. When Soul Blade, the enigmatic stranger, entered the saloon, all eyes turned. It made an impact in 1997, but does it still eviscerate the competition? One game will provide the emphatic answer yes. The action in Soul Blade is unrelenting and high octane, a refreshing alternative to the disciplined combat of *Tekken*. The characters look little short of stunning; well textured with astounding animation and a wealth of moves to master. Not to mention weapons. Swords, nunchucks and bloody great bladed poles, all are there to rend some flesh with. Soul Blade boasts an extended lifespan via the Edge Master mode, a form of story mode that makes you win each bout to specific criteria, such as winning with a combo or a ring out. At twenty quid, it will appeal to even the most blasé of beat 'em-up fans.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Judgement may be harsh on Soul Blade after the masterly *Tekken 3*, but the first game will convert you instantly.

STATION

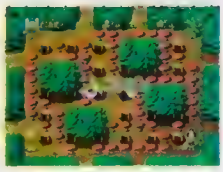
- Still a worthy contender to the *Tekken* throne, despite the constraints of age.
- Tendency to reduce combat to random button bashing may annoy the purists.

Cheap. Engrossing. Georgeous. Buy it, buy it, buy it.

OUT OF 100
89

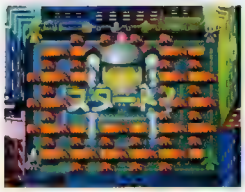
Rated by Nick White

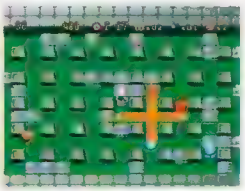
BOMBERMAN



PUBLISHER: Virgin **DEVELOPER:** Hudson **RELEASE DATE:** Out now on import (Project K 0181 508 1328)
GAME TYPE: Arcade/Puzzle **NO OF PLAYERS:** 1-5 **PRICE:** £55.00 (approx) **COMPATIBILITY:** None

After a spate of new but decrepit looking 'retro' games, one that finally hits the mark.





Gaming nostalgia predates the rise of Atari by a long way. In the same way that ten years ago people clung to the notion that *Space Invaders* was the greatest videogame ever, twenty years ago people mourned the death of pinball, and I'm sure heads were shaken at the demise of the hula-hoop, zoetrope and the spinning top. All these things were to be taken out and shown to the next generation with a panegyric along the lines of 'in my day *this* was all we had'.

Some, like yo-yo's and kites will make sporadic comebacks on the Marxist wheel of fashion history, a revisited trend enhanced by modern technology and mass production, or a statement of alternate living, a shunning of vacuous modern standards.

Bomberman, launched onto the PlayStation in more-or-less original form rather than given the 3D makeover that failed so miserably on the Nintendo, will not become a mainstream fashion accessory. The graphics, which could only be described as quirky, are standard Japanese fare; the gameplay however, created a market that produced *Worms* and it is hard not to enjoy. It won't usurp *Tekken* or *Gran Turismo* as multiplay of choice in today's market, but it could easily head up the list of also rans. But if you're going to like it, you've probably still got a SNES under the stairs.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Once past the menu system, Bomberman comes to life with Smartie pack graphics and arcade junkie playability. It does look dated though...

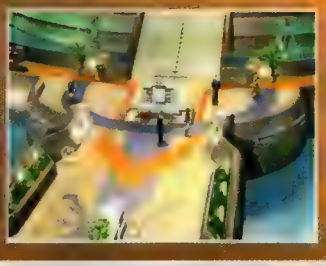
STATION

- This game was made for nights with a few mates and a bottle of whiskey. It brings back happy memories...
- Graphically superseded by other puzzle competition games, and the one player game fails on all levels.

Every other format has had it, so why not the PSX?

OUT OF 100
69

Rated by Adam Oxford



FINAL FANTASY VIII

PUBLISHER: Squaresoft **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now on import (Project K 0181 508 1328)
GAME TYPE: RPG **NO OF PLAYERS:** One **PRICE:** £55.00 (approx.) **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Dual Shock Analog

PICK A CARD ANY CARD

FIRST TEN MINUTES

After a beautiful (if slightly overblown) intro depicting Squall getting cut up, the quest starts in some kind of academy, unsurprisingly populated by girls in miniskirts and kinky boots. Mmm, looks nice, Ho-hum.

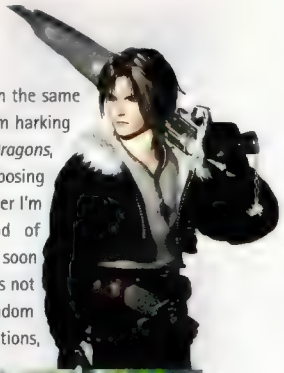
It's here! It's completely in Japanese! Damn!

Bear this in mind: on its first day of release in Japan, Final Fantasy VIII sold a pretty respectable 2.2 million units to what must have been a rabid Japanese public. Whether it'll be the biggest game of the year over here in the face of *Metal Gear Solid*'s sleek originality remains to be seen, but it's almost a foregone conclusion that it will sell truckfulls and dominate the lives of many for months. However, I must admit to being one of the twenty percent or so of PSX owners who failed to be swept up by *FFVII* mania and finds much of the current Oriental RPG style to be formulaic and twee. Most of the superficial visual or idiosyncratic good points have been covered in issue six too, so this review will be based on hard gameplay facts rather than the dewy-eyed affection this game precipitates. That being said it's almost impossible to understand what is going on as the text is all in Japanese script so vital points of plot and basic progression will be lost, despite the assistance of the decidedly dodgy internet translation we've acquired.

Fantasy Makeover

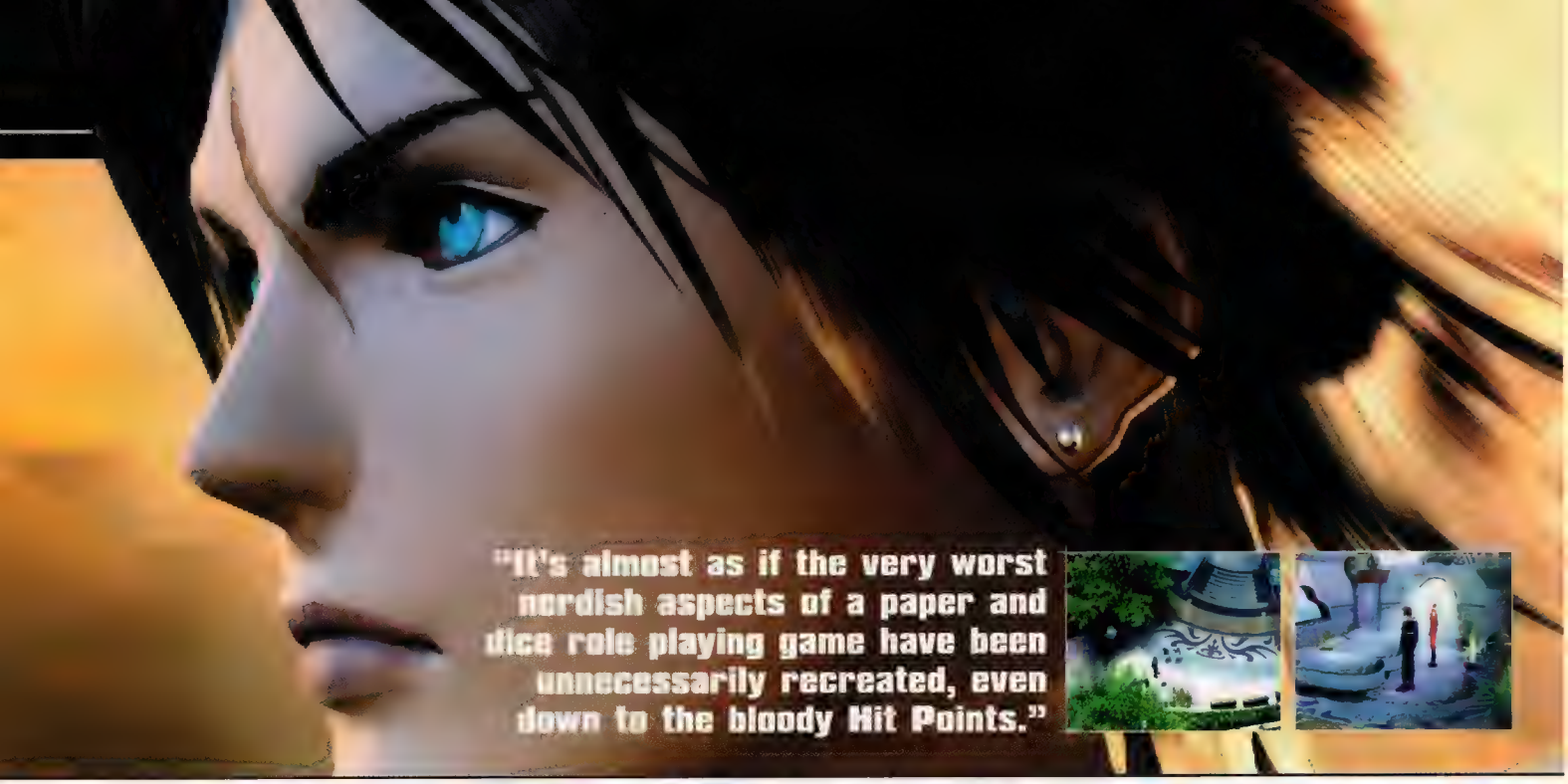
The first and most obvious change from the previous episode is how the spiky-haired mangaloid characters have been replaced with human-proportioned (and far more Westernised) individuals that show an obvious influence from the bafflingly unreleased Square game *Parasite Eve*. The hero Squall (who looks alarmingly similar to David Beckham) strides about scenery that is basically a very pretty static backdrop, which, after experiencing the multi-faceted and interactive environments of *MGS* and *Syphon Filter* seems more than a tad sterile. It is undeniably sublime visually though, the FMV interludes are particularly stunning (just as well as they can't be skipped) with simple things like the way a character's hair ruffles in the wind and catches the sunlight mesmerising regularly.

Having text-based as opposed to audible speech also seems an odd feature nowadays, seeing as *MGS* can quite easily regurgitate ten-minute cutscenes rammed full of dialogue.

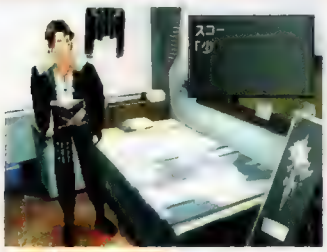


Combat Eight

The combat system is of course much the same as before, a quaint turn-based system harking back to the likes of *Dungeons and Dragons*, reliant on uninspiring duels of opposing statistics. As a *Final Fantasy* newcomer I'm baffled that this lumpen method of fighting was put up with in *FFVII* as it soon becomes repetitive and chorish. That's not even considering the irritatingly random nature of much of the confrontations,



"It's almost as if the very worst nerdish aspects of a paper and dice role playing game have been unnecessarily recreated, even down to the bloody Hit Points."



LEFT TO RIGHT: Lost Hit Points can be regained by going for a kip in the dormitory, apparently; Jeff Goldblum would be of more use here than Squall it seems; that crop-headed chap is Squall's arch-rival Seifer with his cronies, who will no doubt cause him a spot of bother at some point in the near future.

which on the World Map overview sections spring up without warning and with no chance of avoidance, making the simple act of getting from point A to B a fraught and finger-drumming experience. It's almost as if the very worst nerdish aspects of a paper and dice role playing game have been unnecessarily recreated, down to the bloody Hit Points. Oh, and the much-vaunted music is at turns cloyingly sentimental and plastically pompous.

"It is undeniably sublime visually, it just feels artificial to explore..."

Sour The Grapes Well, My Son

Much of the above is going to fall on deaf and uncaring ears of course, and to be fair an awful lot of the game is hidden in the language gap, but even if you added the most engrossing and emotionally resonant plot ever you'd still have a very attractive but antiquated game that seems to revel in its own limitations rather than push the envelope. My contentious reading of the whole *Final Fantasy* phenomena is that it was the first RPG played by a great many new PSX owners who were enamoured by the visuals and expansive plot, and thus accepted the exhausting game structure as some kind of penance. Whether the English-language PAL copy (which according to Square will come 'later this year') can change my mind remains to be seen, but I wouldn't hold your breath.

BELOW LEFT: Waking up after his enforced circumcision, the young hero felt much better.

THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET

COMPETITION

BRAVE FENCER MUSASHIDEN

Strangely popular RPG; sappy, under-achieving, adored by anoraks.

23%

PARASITE EVE

Creepy, horror-tinged, could have rivalled *Resident Evil*, but was left on the shelf.

85%

STATION

(+) Undeniably sweet to look at, although the scenery is basically no more than an oil painting.

(–) That blasted combat method, no speech, nasty RPG conventions at every turn.

The Square equivalent of *Titanic II*, starring different people on a different boat.

OUT OF 100

71

Rated by Christian Slater

BEATMANIA

PUBLISHER: Konami **DEVELOPER:** In-House **RELEASE DATE:** Out now on import (Project K 0181 508 1328)
GAME TYPE: Rhythm Action **NO OF PLAYERS:** 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Beatmania Pad, Dual Shock

FIRST TEN MINUTES

The first experience of Beatmania will be as tormenting as *Songs of Praise* as you fumble with the rhythms. It does get easier, however. Slightly.

Possibly the safest way to fumble and scratch the wax in your bedroom without going blind.

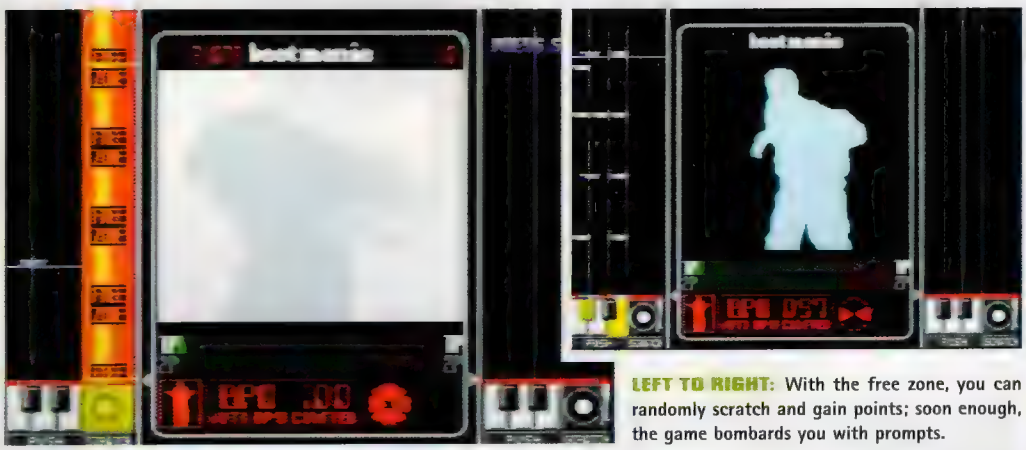
It's an easily attestable fact that the Japanese have a deep rooted love, maybe even a fetish, for obscure simulation games. Where else in the world can you find popular titles, loved by a wide demographic range, based upon train-driving or dating doe-eyed schoolgirls? Now those Nippon wonder workers are giving us the chance to be a slammin' wax-master DJ.

Top Knockin' Beats

So what the hell is a 'rhythm action' game? A dubiously translated phrase on the Beatmania pad calls it 'A real-time dance music game hard and fat'. No help there then. Ostensibly, the aim is to hit joypad buttons in time to an on-screen prompt. This may sound as engaging as a chartered accountants' 'figures of the week' meeting, but there is a tectonic plate of gaming joy under the button pushing surface.

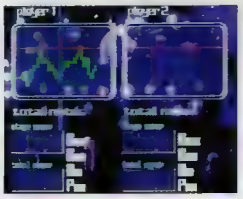
To call Beatmania a DJ simulator, though, is something of a misnomer. Professional DJs create entire tracks, whereas in Beatmania you essentially add a few predetermined bleeps and samples to one of 22 set tunes. Each key press adds a small nuance to the track, be it a vocal sample, obscure noise or percussion, fitting well into the flow if you got da rhythm to make it all synchronise. Chances are, in the short term,

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The DJ battle provides a distracting scratchin' sub-game, fun for you and a friend; the resident MC, DJ Konami, attempts to help out by chipping in with embarrassingly cheesy rap clichés every now and then.



LEFT TO RIGHT: With the free zone, you can randomly scratch and gain points; soon enough, the game bombards you with prompts.

"The theme track from Metal Gear Solid even makes an impromptu appearance"



ABOVE: Miss notes and receive an insulting comment. All included in the price, of course.

ABOVE: Bring on the dancing stick girls! Glad you spent that forty quid now?

you'll end up with a jagged cacophony that can make even the warbling of The Corrs seem mellifluous by comparison.

The tracks available are a curious assortment with some dubious stylistic classifications (Beatmania believes, for example, that an ambient track runs at 140bpm). The musical styles waiting for you to bastardise are fairly eclectic, in their context, ranging from hip-hop, reggae, techno and grating Japanese girlie-pop. The theme from *Metal Gear Solid* even makes an impromptu appearance. Predictably, the tracks soon cease being catchy and evolve into the realms of the bloody annoying.

Rhythm Method

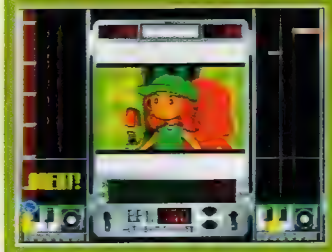
Rhythm is the vital thang you need to appreciate Beatmania and draw any pleasure from the experience, rather than abject frustration at how woefully uncoordinated you truly are, unaided by the badly conceived difficulty curve, for which the training mode offers no real help. The easy tracks are indeed simple enough for a catatonic pensioner to sound like a chill groove runner, but attempt a track on normal setting and the experience becomes frantic as the prompt lines unrelentingly pour down the screen, reducing you to random button slapping in the hope of success. This base tactic may work well in beat 'em-ups, but not with Beatmania, which demands the split second precision of the anally retentive.

To progress to the more advanced tracks you need to make enough 'hits', or correct notes to win approval from the judges. A booing and jeering audience stand by to mock those without the motor skills of a minor deity.

Beat Me, Beat Me

PaRappa and *Bust-A-Groove* differ from Beatmania in that they were visually, as well as aurally, stimulating. Beatmania offers you nothing to view on the screen bar some rapid-cut, acid-house style video clips. There is precious little motivation to play through all the tracks too, as the reward is a few hidden tunes and more jerky video clips. Beatmania is reasonably compelling after the tempest of the initial frustration has abated, but, on the whole, you'd be well advised to borrow this or pick it up on the cheap as the thrill it offers is decidedly short term. If only the game let you mix with any CD you wanted, you could DJ to, say, L7, Napalm Death or even Shakin' Stevens. Now that would be superb...

TETRIS THIS AIN'T



A

COMPETITION

PARAPPA THE RAPPER
Jaunty musical fun with the one-dimensional canine lyrical gangsta.

BUST-A-GROOVE
Same button hitting style but with well animated dancers and room for improvisation.

STATION

+ Involving in a way you wouldn't expect, with a high "just one more go" quotient.

− The learning curve is punishing rather than rewarding, giving you no real sense of achievement.

Will nurture the funk-maestro in us all, but its diverting charms soon tarnish.

OUT OF 100

74

Rated by Nick White

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Tel: 01302 325 225
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Tel: 01992 503 133
Internet: N/A

GREMLIN
Tel: 0114 263 9900
Internet: www.gremlin.co.uk

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Tel: 01865 264 800
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GT INTERACTIVE
Tel: 0171 486 5099
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Helpline: 0171 565 7303

IGUANA ENT.
Tel: 01642 614 000
Internet: www.acclaimnation.com

INTERPLAY
Tel: 01628 423 666
Internet: www.interplay.com
Helpline: 01628 423 723

JVC
Tel: 0171 240 3121
Internet: www.jvc-europe.com

KONAMI
Tel: 01895 853 000
Internet: www.konami.com
www.konami.co.jp

LOGIC 3
Tel: 0181 900 0024
Internet: N/A

LUCASARTS
No UK offices
Internet: www.lucasgames.com

MAXIS
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Internet: www.maxis.com

MIDWAY
No UK offices
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MINDSCAPE
Tel: 01444 246 333
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NAMCO
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Internet: www.namco.com
www.namco.co.uk

NAUGHTY DOG
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Internet: www.naughtydog.com

OCEAN/INFOGRAMES
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PROBE
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Internet: www.probe.co.uk

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Tel: 0151 282 3000
Internet: www.psygnosis.com

SCI
Tel: 0171 585 3308
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SHINY
No UK offices
Internet: www.shiny.com

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TAKE 2 INT.
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Internet: www.vie.co.uk

Try to make your calls to companies pertinent and only call with problems after you have read the manual throughly. If you've exhausted your options and explored every avenue, then you've every right to call the company about your software. After all, if you'd bought anything else off a company and you had a question, they'd be happy to help!

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PAGE 32
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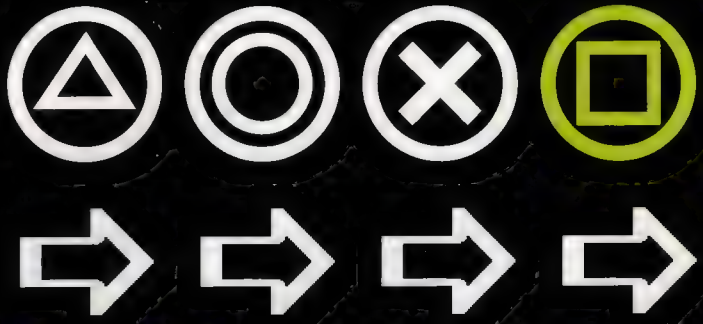
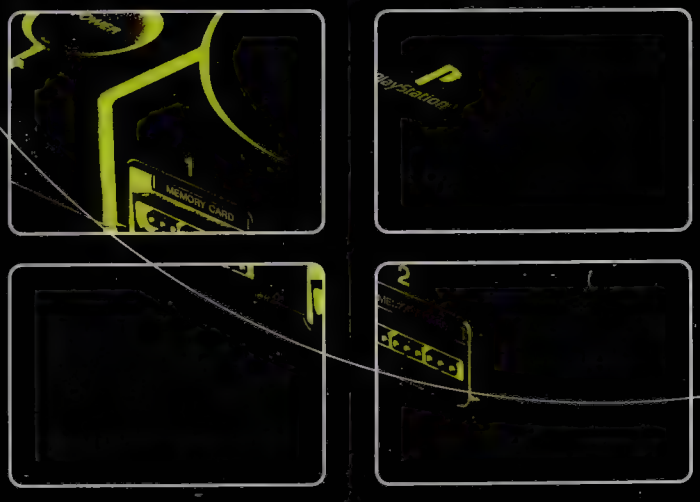
ON SALE NOW!

THE eDGE

Some would say that cheating is wrong and immoral. We here at STATION raise a middle finger to that belief. We aim to provide the hottest cheats service this side of Krakatoa to give you the step-up in your favourite games. This month, we've got cutting edge advice for all of Rollcage and Ridge Racer Type 4, and provided mini-guides to Pool Shark, KKND Krossfire and Street Skater.





BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

CHEATS

- Bomberman Fantasy Race
- Ehrgeiz
- FIFA '99
- MSH Vs Street Fighter
- Max Power Racing
- O.D.T
- R-Type Delta
- Rugrats
- Silent Hill
- Test Drive 5
- Test Drive Off Road 2
- Tiger Woods '99
- Zero Divide
- X-Men Vs. Streetfighter
- Dark Stalkers 2
- Smash Court 2

MINI GUIDES

- KKND Krossfire
- Pool Shark
- Street Skater

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SOLUTIONS

- Ridge Racer Type 4
- Rollcage

BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE

EXTRA SAVED GAME POSITIONS:
Select the 'New System Data' option, then hold L1 + R1 + L2 + R2 + SELECT + START and press ⊙ to increase the number of saved game positions to 50.

MIRROR TRACKS:
Finish in first place on all tracks. Then, press → at the track selection screen.

ALTERNATE FOOTSTEP SOUND EFFECT:
Pause game play and press L1, L2, R1, R2, ↓, ↑, ⊙.

DOUBLE MONEY:
Save the game twice in different slots. Enter the bank and use the money transfer function. Move the money from one slot to the other to double your money.

BONUS ANIMALS:
Purchase all five kangaroos and five dinosaurs. The blank kangaroo and white dinosaur will now be available.

EHRGEIZ

ALTERNATE COSTUMES:
Hold ↑ while selecting a fighter at the arcade mode character selection screen.

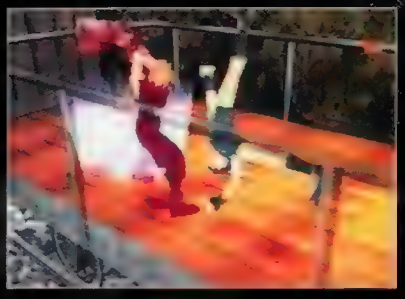
FIGHT AS KOUJI MASUDA:
Successfully complete arcade mode using a male character.

FIGHT AS CLAIR ANDREWS:
Successfully complete arcade mode using a female character.

FIGHT AS YUFFIE KISARAGI:
Successfully complete arcade mode as Cloud.

FIGHT AS VINCENT VALENTINE:
Successfully complete arcade mode as Tifa.

FIGHT AS DJANGO:
Successfully complete arcade mode using the eight regular non-*Final Fantasy VII* characters.



KKND KROSSFIRE: THE BASICS

INFANTRY Vs VEHICLES

In KKND size doesn't matter. Large expensive vehicles can do more damage but often require greater distances to fire. A group of infantry can get nice and close to a large vehicle and take it out. Large vehicles and Gun Towers are good to use in strategic locations – particularly high ground.

THE TOWER DESTROYERS

Kamikaze, Martyr and Michaelangelo units are the best for removing those annoying Gun Towers. Try and use buildings and trees as cover to allow the units to get close enough. You'll need two units to destroy a Tech 2 Tower.

BUILD YOUR OUTPOST WISELY

The enemy knows your actions when building and upgrading your base. They will match your defences. The best plan is to improve your oil production and build Gun Towers. Once you have enough Resource Units in reserve, upgrade and build the more powerful units. You may find that if you need to engage in an aerial assault, send ground units in to clear the Anti-Aircraft guns.

WANT MORE BUCKS?

Build your power stations as close to an Oil Rig as possible. It means that your tanker(s) will travel a shorter distance. If they are close together, try to use a maximum of two tankers – any more and a traffic jam will occur. Also, you should upgrade your power stations because this will allow them to convert the same amount of oil faster and into more Resource Units.

ALTERNATIVE ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENCES

Are you having problems with aerial attacks and your AA Towers are taking too long to build? Then why not upgrade the Troop facility and build Rocketeers, Bazookoids or Pollinators? They are a cheaper alternative, faster to build and they're mobile. As a group, they are far more affective than the towers.

RECYCLE IT

So you're on a low tech level mission and all your buildings have been upgraded to the max level – why not recycle your Tech lab? Let's face it, it's job is done and unless you want to build aircraft, its purpose is somewhat useless. Besides, think of the extra cash you'll get for it!

PRACTICE YOUR CONTROLLER ROUTINES

You've got the first five missions to practice important control methods. If you follow a controller routine you will find it easier to get out of trouble when all hell breaks loose. No set of options or routines is right or wrong.

BURNING YOUR BRIDGES

Don't stand in the middle of destructible bridges. If one of your units blows up it could destroy the bridge. When doing a Forced Attack on a bridge, keep your Flamer troops far away!

FIFA '99

FINDING RONALDO:
Ronaldo may be found in the game as Calcio on the Inter Milan team.

SUPERSTAR PLAYERS:
Enter the team management screen, select the 'Transfers' option, then press L2, L1, R2, R1, ○, ○, ↑, ↓, ←, →, SELECT.
A sound will confirm correct code entry. 25 of the best players will now be available.

ATLANTA ATTACK TEAM:
Win the Champions Cup as Brazil under the professional difficulty level.
Then, select 'Custom Cup' and choose 'International Team'.

MAX POWER RACING

GTI CARS:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the Rome course and press L1, ○, R1, ○, L2, ○.

PERFORMANCE CARS:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the U.K. course and press R1, ○, L1, ○, R2, ○.

R/C CARS:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the USA course and press ○, L1, R2, L2, ○, R1.

MAX POWER TRACK:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the Peru course and press ○, ○, R2, R2, R1, R1.

ALL TRACKS:
Select arcade mode. Then, highlight the Africa course and press R1, R2, R1, L1, ○, L1.

REVERSED TRACKS:
Successfully complete all thirty tracks to race any of the tracks in the opposite direction.

MARVEL SUPER HEROS VS STREET FIGHTER

CHEAT MENU:
Quickly press R1, ○, ←, △, ○ at the main menu.

FIGHT AS ARMORED SPIDER-MAN:
Highlight Spider-Man at the character selection screen, then hold SELECT and press any Punch or Kick button.

FIGHT AS MEPHISTO:
Highlight Omega Red at the character selection screen, then hold SELECT and press any Punch or Kick button.

FIGHT AS US AGENT:
Highlight Vega (M Bison) at the character selection screen, then hold SELECT and press any Punch or Kick. US Agent's uniform will be grey for Punch or green for Kick.

FIGHT AS SHADOW CHARLIE:
Highlight Dhalsim at the character selection screen, then hold SELECT and press any Punch or Kick button.

FIGHT AS MEGA SAKURA:
Highlight Hulk at the character selection screen, then hold SELECT and press any Punch or Kick button.

FIGHT AS MEGA ZANGIEF:
Highlight Blackheart at the character selection screen, then hold SELECT and press any Punch or Kick button.

FIGHT AS GREY HULK:
Enable the 'Fight as Mega Sakura' code and pick Hulk as her partner. This colour code should be universal for all characters.

FIGHT AS SAME CHARACTER:
Successfully complete the game once. The same character may now be chosen by both players on the character selection screen.

EXPLODING DAN:
Hold WP after selecting Dan as your first character. Release the button after the word 'Fight' disappears.

EXTRA JUMPS FOR NORIMARO:
Select Norimaro, then press WK + MP + HK at the versus screen until the round begins. Norimaro will now be able to jump four times in the air.

FASTER GAME SPEED:
Select any character, then hold WK + MK + HK until the word 'Fight' disappears.

BONUS OPTIONS:
Successfully complete the game without losing any rounds. Additional selections will appear on the options menu, including increasing the speed to eight stars and always having full combo meters.

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A-TRAIN
Unlimited money
3660B66459F2
3660B6635914
3660B6625939
3660B661595C

ACE COMBAT 2
Infinite Missiles
86582394595A
Infinite Fuel
8657EC64695A
8657EC62755C
No Damage
865823285A9A
86582326755C
8657ECCC5A9A
8657ECCA755C

ADVENTURES OF ALUNDRA
Infinite Money
8674FED4785F
Infinite Gilded Falcons
8674FEDC5917
Possess Sword
8674FEE85959
Possess Fiend Blade
8674FEEC5959
Possess Holy Sword
8674FEF05959
Possess Hunters Bow
8674FEF45959
Possess Willow Bow
8674FEF85959
Possess Spirit Wand
8674FEFC5959
Possess Legend Sword
8674FE005959
Possess Iron Flail
8674FE045959
Possess Steel Flail
8674FE085959
Possess Ice Wand
8674FE185959
Possess Fire Wand
8674FE205959
Possess Spring Bean
8674035C5959
Possess Sand Cape
867403605959
Possess Bomb
8674036C5959
Possess Infinite Herbs
867403705961
Possess Strength Elixir
867403745959
Possess Magic Elixir
867403785959
Possess Wonder Essence
8674037C5959
Possess Aqua Cape
867403805959
Possess Strength Tonic
867403845959
Possess Earth Scroll
8674038C5959
Possess Earth Book
867403905959
Possess Water Scroll
867403945959
Possess Water Book
867403985959
Possess Fire Scroll
8674039C5959
Possess Fire Book
867403A05959
Possess Wind Scroll
867403A45959
Possess Wind Book
867403A85959
Possess Olgas Ring
867403AC5959
Possess Oaks Ring
867403B05959
Possess Silver Armlet
867403B45959
Possess Navas Charm
867403B85959
Possess Recovery Ring
867403BC5959
Possess Refresher
867403C05959
Possess Power Glove
867403CC5959
Infinite Keys
867403D45917
Get Agate Crest
8671292C5959
Get Broken armour
867129AC5959
Get all keys
8671291C59BB
Get charm boots
867129985959
8671294C5959
Get Emerald Crest
867129345959
Get Bouquet
867129505959
Get Garnet Crest
867129305959
Get Ruby Crest
867129205959
Get Sapphire Crest
8671290C5959
Get Secret Pass
8671290C5959
Get Topaz Crest
867129285959
Invincibility
867019BC59A0
Moon Jump!!!
76712A40599A
86701CA6595B

AIR COMBAT
Infinite guns
86643E9C7861
Infinite missiles
86643E9859BB
Infinite fuel
86643E8CE04F
Unlimited damage
86643DB85ADA

ALIEN TRILOGY
Infinite health
865DFC2C5A5A
Rapid fire
865DFC0E5959
Infinite shotgun shells
865DFC325A5A
Infinite pulse grenades
865DFC3C5A5A
Infinite charge grenades
865DFC445A5A
Infinite handgun bullets
865DFC2E5A5A
Infinite flame thrower ammo
865DFC3A5A5A
Infinite pulse ammo
865DFC385A5A
Infinite smart gun ammo
865DFC405A5A
Infinite batteries
865DFC425A5A
Possess shotgun
865E4F265959
Possess flame thrower
865E4F325959
Possess pulse rifle
865E4F2A5959
Possess smart gun
865E4F2E5959

ALL STAR TENNIS '99
No Points P1
36734C7A595A
No Points P2
36734C79595A

ALONE IN THE DARK II
Infinite bullets
86662DB25958
Infinite Thompson bullets
86662DA45964
Infinite energy
86662DB45987

APOCALYPSE
Level Select
366350185959
Debug Mode
3663501C5959
Invincible
366350FC5959
Infinite Lives
366350005959
All Weapons Infinite Ammo
366350F85959
Hide Weapon & Health Meter
36635004595A
Infinite Smart Bombs
86592A085961
86592A06755C
86592F705961
86592F6E755C
Infinite Energy
86593524595A
86593522595A

AREA 51
Infinite lives P1
865C30C85955
Infinite health P1
865C30C05964
Infinite credits P1
865CF0145961
Infinite ammo P1
865C309C5962
Infinite grenades P1
865C30A05959
P1 has auto shot gun
865C30AC595B
Infinite lives P2
865C2D745955
Infinite health P2
865C2D6C5964
Infinite credits P2
865CF0125961
Infinite ammo P2
865C30485962
Infinite grenades P2
865C304C5959
P2 has auto shot gun
865C2D58595B

ARMOURED CORE
Infinite Money
8657F52C504F

ASTEROIDS
Play As Excalibur
366152A0595B
Infinite Lives
36655F185964
Unlimited Special
86656070595C

BATTLE STATIONS
Infinite Energy Player 1
8662891C59B6

BEDLAM
Unlimited Credits
86604F54D04F

BLACK DAWN
Infinite fuel
865C5BDE56C5
Infinite missiles
865C5CAC59BB
365C5CB25955
Infinite rockets
865C5CAA59BB
365C5CB15955
Infinite napalm
865C5CB059BB
365C5CB85955
Infinite nuclear bomb
865C5CAE59BB
365C5CB75955
Infinite unknown weapon
865C5CB459BB
365C5CB65955

BLAM! – MACHINE HEAD
Infinite energy
865F4C1C594F
Infinite flame thrower
8662772C594F
Infinite rockets
86627730594F
Infinite big rockets
86627734594F
Infinite laser
86627738594F
Infinite small bombs
8662773C594F
Infinite big bombs
86627740594F
Infinite flash bombs
86627744594F

BLAST RADIUS
Kill Xplorer Check (Activate or game won't boot)
7658A37A65A9
5658A37C5956
F684000C0000
The following codes can be switched on or off.

Unlimited Shield
36644138599C
Unlimited Energy
366441365998
Unlimited Fuel
36642A4A599A
100,000 Credits
86642AF8D7FA
86642AF65959
Unlimited Ammo
3664413E59BB
No Overheating
8660010A595A

BLOODY ROAR
Infinite Energy Player 1
665657585597E
1F800198EA80
FFFFFFFC0038
8040801F1A3C
98015A370000
40A780EA1A3C
00389A400070
1A4000000000
04005A270800
400310000042
Play as Uriko
B65557685A5A
16734EDC5962

BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE
Always Come First
3655574A5959
Infinite GB (Money)
866A8ACCD7EF

BOMBERMAN WORLD
Infinite Lives
36621EA85955
Infinite Time
365BCED6595A
Have All Crystals
8E5BCE285962
Continually Drop Bombs
86621E5C5962
86621E5A5962
Complete All Levels
865BD3785956
Invincibility
36621E66596C

BREATH OF FIRE 3
Player 1 only
Infinite Lives
866AA0C25922
Maxium HP
866AA0DC5922
Maximum AP
866AA0DA5922
Deadly Blade
866AA0CA595D
Mithril Armour
866AA0C9595D
Dragon Shield
866AA0D05999

O.D.T

FULL ENERGY:
Pause game play and press ←, →, ←, →, ●.

FULL AMMUNITION:
Pause game play and press ←, →, ↑, ↓, ●, ●.

FULL MANA:
Pause game play and press ←, →, ←, →, ●.

UPGRADE MAGIC:
Pause game play and press ↓, ▲, SELECT, L1, R1, SELECT.

UPGRADE WEAPON LEVEL:
Pause game play and press R1, L1, R2, L2, ←, →, ↑, ↓.

FULL EXPERIENCE:
Pause game play and press ●, ▲, L1, L2, R2, SELECT.

PLAY AS SOPHIA:
Press L1, L2, R2, R1 at the main menu.

PLAY AS KARMA:
Press R1, R2, L2, L1 at the main menu.

HINT: COMPLETING THE GAME:
The full ending to the game is only available when completed under the 'Hard' difficulty setting.

R-TYPE DELTA

REFILL FORCE POWER:
Press START to pause game play. Then, hold L2 and press ←, →, ↑, ↓, →, ←, ↑, ↓ + ▲.

RED POWER-UP:
Collect a Force Pod, then press START to pause game play. Then, hold L2 and press ←, →, ↑, ↓, →, ←, ↑, ↓ + ●.

BLUE POWER-UP:
Collect a Force Pod, then press START to pause game play. Hold L2 and press ←, →, ↑, ↓, →, ←, ↑, ↓ + ✕.

YELLOW POWER-UP:
Collect a Force Pod, then press START to pause game play. Then, hold L2 and press ←, →, ↑, ↓, →, ←, ↑, ↓ + ●.

LEVEL SELECT:
Use the bombs more than 10,000 times. This may be checked by viewing the 'Notes' menu. A 'Stage Select' option will appear when this goal has been completed.

EXTRA CREDITS:
Accumulate over three hours of game play to increase the number of credits to nine.

UNLIMITED CREDITS:
Accumulate over six hours of game play to unlock a 'Free Play' mode.

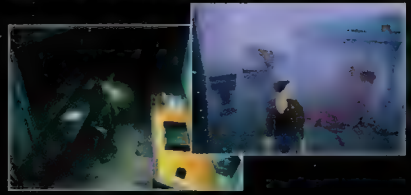
POWER ARMOR:
The Power Armor is the best jet in the game. It can be accessed by successfully completing the game under the 'Human' or higher difficulty setting, or by playing the game over one hundred times.

RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR

INSIDE HINTS:
Insert the game disc into a PC compatible CD-ROM drive. Enter the 'data\hints' directory to access forty-two text files containing hints for the game.

SILENT HILL

EXTRA OPTIONS:
Press R1 + L2 + R1 + R2 at the options screen. An 'Extra Options' menu with weapon control, blood color, view control, retreat turn, walk/run control, and auto aiming selections will appear.



TEST DRIVE 5

EASY HIGH SCORE:
Start a drag race that heavily favours your car.

UNLOCK ALL GAME MODES:
Enter VRSIX as a name on the high score screen, and save the game settings. Cop Chase and other game modes will now be selectable.

ALL TRACKS:
Enter NTHREE and MTHREE as names on the high score screen.

ALL CARS:
Enter RONE and NOLIFE as names on the high score screen. All cars, including the Pitbull Special, Chris' Beast and The All Mighty Maui bonus cars will now be selectable.

SUPER ARCADE MODE:
Enter SPURT as a name on the high score screen.

BONUS FMV MUSIC SEQUENCE:
Enter AUXYRAY as a name on the high score screen. Then, select the 'Fear Factory Video' option at the main menu.

NO CPU CARS DURING CUP RACE:
Complete the first race of any tournament except for Ultimate. Save the game and reset the PlayStation. Reload the previous race, select 'Full Race' and 'Time Trials'. Select any car and complete the time trial race. Quit time trial mode and select 'Continue Race' without loading the previously saved game. Select 'Next Cup Race' to start with the car used during the time trials with no CPU cars.

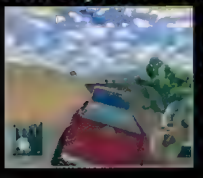
TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD 2

ALL CARS AND TRACKS:
Hold SELECT and press L1, ←, L2, →, L3, ←, R1, R2, at the main screen.

SCHOOL BUS:
Select 'Single Race' or 'World Tour' mode. Then, hold SELECT and press L2, ↑, L3, ↓, ↓, R3, ●, R1 at the transmission selection screen.

ICE CREAM TRUCK:
Select 'Single Race' or 'World Tour' mode. Then, hold SELECT and press R2, L2, R3, ↓, ↓, L2, L3, R1 at the transmission selection screen.

BLACK WIDOW TRUCK:
Select 'Single Race' or 'World Tour' mode. Then, hold SELECT and press R1, L2, R3, ↓, ↓, ↑, L3, R1 at the transmission selection screen.



POOL SHARK

ROLL AND SLIDE

All balls, but particularly the cue ball, have two basic types of motion. When a ball is rolling it will do so in a straight line slowly reducing its speed. At some critical point the ball will no longer have enough energy and will stop. This appears to happen quite suddenly on some cloths. The sliding phase is much more interesting, the ball is not in full contact with the surface and may be spinning in a different direction to it's movement. Friction from the cloth is trying to grab the spin of the ball, and the ball is trying to change direction to that of the spin. Thus, if you have backspin the ball will be slowing down as it slides. If you have side-in the ball will be trying to change direction.

SPIN FOR POSITION

You put spin on the cue ball by hitting off centre. In fact if you hit the cue ball dead centre then you will actually slightly stun the ball, if you want the ball to roll with no slide you must hit it slightly above centre so that the initial top spin is the same as the rolling spin. Spin can be used to change both the direction of the cue ball after the impact and its speed. If you use topspin the cue ball will generally finish up straighter than the natural angle. If you use backspin it will be behind the natural angle.

CUSHIONS

Cushions are not just there to prevent you losing the balls onto the floor. A cushion also has a natural (or true) angle, which depends on its stiffness. It helps to think of true cushions like mirrors, if you look at a mirror from the right you will not see yourself but objects to the left of you. The light rays coming from the object bounce off of the mirror and reach your eyes. Now think of cushion play by reversing the process. What you need to do is imagine you're seeing the target beyond the cushion. In fact if you draw a straight line from the target, through the cushion and at right angles to it, the imaginary target will be the same distance beyond the cushion as the target is in front. It all sounds a bit mechanical, but does help you to move toward the instinctive feel for cushion play.

POCKETS

Corner pockets can be approached from most angles. However, as the angle gets larger, if you simply aim for the centre of the pocket you risk hitting the jaw and the near-side cushion. It's best to aim to bounce the ball off the far jaw and back into the pocket. At even greater angles this will bounce the ball back. The greatest margin of error is where the ball is heading straight into the pocket. Side pockets generally have wider jaws. This means that both critical points are at smaller angles and the pocket is more prone to rattling balls out. Side pockets should generally only be approached from fairly straight angles.

UP AND AWAY!

Sometimes the only way to get out of a sticky situation is to use a jump shot. You can take a look at a jump shot in the School of Pool trick shots. The principle is quite simple. Hit the cue ball from above. The cloth bunches up as the cue ball is pushed down and assists in gaining height. In general you need to raise the cue butt to around 45 degrees. It also helps to use a little bottom spin both to assist in take-off and slow the ball down once it lands.

SWERVE SHOT

To get around a ball all you have to do is hit the cue ball at an angle and with some side spin. Should be a piece of cake. There are however a couple of bits of golden knowledge to help you achieve Nirvana. You need to use side to pull the ball in the direction of the object ball once you have cleared the blocker. But the amount of side you can put on is always smaller than the forward sliding speed. You will need lots of spin but too much forward speed and the ball will never turn. So you can do two things: raise the cue butt which means you are hitting into the table so some of the initial sliding speed is immediately lost; alternatively you can apply bottom as well as side, this will slow the ball as it transfers to rolling. All this means that the impact with the object ball will be at low speed so don't expect to do much more than to dribble it into a pocket.

TIGER WOODS '99

200% TERRAIN ELEVATION INCREASE:
Select the 'Edit Name' option on the 'Player Select' menu and enter PUMPZ as a name.

400% TERRAIN ELEVATION INCREASE:
Select the 'Edit Name' option on the 'Player Select' menu and enter MAXIMUMZ as a name.

FLAT TERRAIN:
Select the 'Edit Name' option on the 'Player Select' menu and enter OLD_SCHOOL as a name.

CHANGE VOICES:
Hold ↑ or ↓, then press ⊗, ○, △, □, L1, L2, R1, or R2 to increase or decrease the pitch of the comments made during the game.

ZERO DIVIDE

FIGHT AS NOX AND EVE:
Complete the game using any character.

FIGHT AS NECO AND MODOKI:
Complete the game using Nox and Eve.

VIEW NECO'S DEMO:
Successfully complete the game with any character, then hold SELECT + START to restart.

ALTERNATE CHARACTER COLOR:
Hold SELECT on controller two and press ⊗, ○, □, △, L1, L2, R1, or R2 at the character selection screen.

ADDITIONAL LEVELS:
Two additional levels well be available after the game is completed under each of the three difficulty settings for a total of six new levels.

STREET SKATER

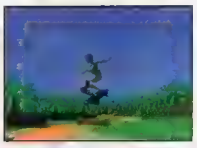
THE STUNTS

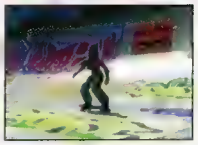
It's imperative that you learn the basic stunts in order to gain enough points to clear each stage. Use the 'Free Skate' option to practice the following (take off the time limit if required). Look at the bottom of the screen for the stunt guide in 'Free Skate' mode. This'll show you what buttons were pressed on the last stunt you performed.

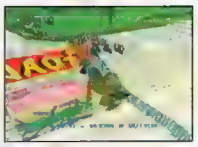
ON THE HALFPIPES

(Some of these can be done on a normal steep ramp so experiment!)

	Press	Speed
Front flip double grab air walk	↑ + ⊗	Normal
Switch finger flip double grab air walk	↑ + ⊗	Fast/top
Finger flip 720	↑ + ⊗	Fast
Double back flip	→ + ⊗	Fast
Double flip to Stalefish	← + ⊗	Normal
Switch double flip to Stalefish	→ + ⊗	Fast/top
Rocket air	← + ⊗	Fast
Double front flip rocket	↑ + ⊗	Fast
Switch double flip to rocket	↑ + ⊗	Fast/top
Board spin 720	↓ + ⊗	Normal
Board spin 720 handstand	↓ + ⊗	Fast
Banzai	→ + ⊗	Normal
Switch Banzai	→ + ⊗	Normal/fast
Demae	↓ + ⊗	Normal/slow
Switch Demae	↓ + ⊗	Normal/fast







IN THE BOWL

Some of these can be done on a normal steep ramp. As with all the stunts, the angle you jump decides which stunt is performed. Try these out in the bowl...

	Press	Speed
Double front flip rocket	← + ⊗	Fast
Propeller	→ + ⊗	Fast
Double Front flip / Double grab air walk to method	↓ + ⊗	Top
Switch double Front flip / Double grab air walk to method	→ + ⊗	Top
F/S 1440 Tail grab to mute	← + ⊗	Fast/top
Switch F/S 1440 Tail grab to mute	← + ⊗	Top
Double Front flip/Double nose grab	→ + ⊗	Top
Twister	← + ⊗	Top
Switch twister	← + ⊗	Fast
B/S 720 Handstand	↓ + ⊗	Fast
Nunchuku air	↓ + ⊗	Fast/top
Switch Nunchuku air	↓ + ⊗	Top

ON THE RAMPS

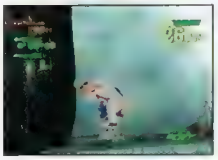
	Press	Speed
Nose grab	↑ + ⊗	Normal
Double Flip	→ + ⊗	Normal
Handstand	↑ + ⊗	Fast
Board spin 360	← + ⊗	Fast
Double Frontflip/Double Nose grab	→ + ⊗	Fast/top
Twister	← + ⊗	Top

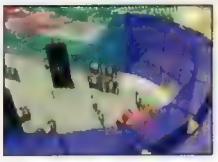
ON THE RAILS

5/0 Grind	⊗ to jump on to the rail at slow speed to tail grind the rail.
K Grind	⊗ to jump on to the rail at slow/fast speed to front axle grind the rail.
Nose Grind	⊗ to jump on to the rail at fast speed to grind the rail. The nose of the board must hit the rail first.
B/S Board Slide	⊗ to jump on to the rail at normal speed from a side angle.

BONUS BOARDS

Complete all three tracks with Saho to gain these 5 new bonus boards...
Rocket Halo Kid – A little kid with a large halo rockets in to the sky... wow!
Vibration – A simple design, but bright enough to be seen on the courses.
Alien With Halo – An alien with a halo (well you tell me!).
Follow Me – A guy in one half of a car yelling 'Follow me!' to the trailing second half... nuff said.
Halo Kid On A Cloud – The designers like this kid and this time they've put him on his own cloud.





X-MEN VS STREET FIGHTER

ARCADE MODE:
Quickly press ⊙, ⊙, →, ⊙, L1 or ⊙, ⊙, →, ⊙, L1 at the main menu to enable the EX Option. Use that option to set 'Original Mode'. Then, choose versus mode and have player one select both of his or her characters. Player two should then select the same two characters in the opposite order that player one used. Begin game play and press HP to switch teammates. The EX Option menu may also be used to keep the power meter full.

FIGHT AS AKUMA (GOUKI):
Highlight Magneto, Juggernaut, Dhalsim, or Vega and press ↑ at the character selection screen.

FIGHT AS APOCALYPSE:
Select versus mode. Highlight Gouki, hold SELECT for at least five seconds and press any Punch button.

FIGHT AS *STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2* VERSION OF CHUN LI:
Highlight Chun Li on the character selection screen. Hold SELECT for at least five seconds and press any button.

RANDOM CHARACTER SELECTION:
Highlight the left end of the character selection screen and press ←. Alternatively, highlight the right end of the character selection screen and press →.

ORIGINAL COSTUME COLORS:
Press LP or LK when selecting a character.

CONTINUE ATTACKING:
Press START immediately after winning the match to continue hitting the defeated character.

IN-GAME RESET:
Hold L1 + R1 + SELECT + START

SMASH COURT 2

VIEW ENDING SEQUENCES:
Press ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ←, ←, ←, →, →, →, → on controller two within four seconds when the phrase 'Press Start' appears on the main menu.

DARK STALKERS 3

FIGHT AS SHADOW:
Highlight the '?' box, press SELECT (x5), then press any button while holding the last SELECT. Defeat an opponent to possess his or her body.

FIGHT AS MARIONETTE:
Highlight the '?' box, press SELECT (x7), then press any button while holding the last SELECT.

FIGHT AS IMAGE TALBAIN:
Highlight Gallon at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press all three Punch or Kick buttons.

FIGHT AS OBORO (SHIN BISHAMON):
Highlight Bishamon at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button.

FIGHT AS LILLIGAN:
Enable the 'Shortcut' option, then select training, arcade, or versus mode. Highlight Lillith at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button to play as Lillith with Morrigan's voice and colours.

FIGHT AS DARKSTALKERS RIKUO:
Enable the 'Shortcut' option, then select training, arcade, or versus mode. Highlight Rikuo at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button. His Sonic Wave move will now be ↓, ↘, → + Punch and Poison Breath will be ↓, ↘, → + Kick.

FIGHT AS MEMORY RESTORED VICTOR:
Enable the 'Shortcut' option, then select training, arcade, or versus mode. Highlight Victor at the character selection screen, hold SELECT, then press any button. His Giga Hammer move may now by used by pressing ↓, ↘, → + Punch, and it may be used as an ES move.

FIGHT AS MARIONET:
Highlight the '?' icon at the character selection screen. Press SELECT (x7) followed by any button. Marionet will transform into the form of the opponent in each match.

FIGHT AS SHADOW:
Highlight the '?' icon at the character selection screen. Press SELECT (x5) followed by any button. Shadow will transform into the previous opponent in the next match.

PLAY AS ORIGINAL GALLON:
Successfully complete the game with Gallon. Then highlight Gallon on the character selection screen and press SELECT + PP or SELECT + KK.

PLAY AS HYPER BISHAMON:
Successfully complete the game with Bishamon. Then highlight Bishamon on the character selection screen and press SELECT + PP or SELECT + KK.

FIGHT AGAINST HYPER BISHAMON:
Begin game play in single player mode and do not lose in any round and defeat at least two characters with EX moves.

Chain Cap
866AA0CF5961
Wisdom Ring
866AA0CE5956
Ring Of Ice
866AA0CD5964
Feather Sword
866AA0CA5964
Royal Dagger
866AA0CA5963
Heavy Dagger
866AA0CA5960
Spirit Blast
866AA0CA593F
Ascension
866AA0CA595F
Ballock Knife
866AA0CA595C
Bronze Sword
866AA0CA595B

BROKEN HELIX
Infinite energy
86592BA4598A
Infinite time
86592BE45584
Infinite plasma
86592CB059E6

BUBBLE BOBBLE (ORIGINAL)
Player 1
infinite lives
866BBE70595B
Player 2
infinite lives
866BBD40595B
Player 1 invincibility
866BBE745A5A
366BBE88595A
Player 2 invincibility
866BBD445A5A
366BBE58595A
Infinite credits
866BBED85961
Player 1 spits
fire-balls
866BBE725A6F
Player 2 spits
fire-balls
866BBD425A6F

BUBBSY 3D
Infinite lives
8671E6D059BB
Infinite shields
8671E6D459BB

BUGGY
Open All Tracks
And Modes
865831795959
Activate
End Sequence
8658317D5959
Add All Camera
Views (Press ⊙)
865831815959
Turn Off all Textures
865831855959
Slowmo Mode
865831895959
First Gate Activates
Powerup
8658318D5959
Always 1st Place
865B20DA595A
865BF1F6595A
865B3D7A595A

A BUG'S LIFE
Infinite lives and 50
grain
8660B9988B56
All F.L.I.K. Letters
Collected
3660B9965956
Always have gold
berry
8660B98A5C5A
Infinite health
3660B98C5956

BUST A GROOVE
Infinite attack P1
865CDA12595C
Infinite attack P2
865CDA26595C
Full power bar P1
865CDAE8B55A
Full power bar P2
865CDAECB55A
Use only ONE of the
Always Win codes
Always win P1
765CDAF0595A
365CDAF05959
Always win P2
7E5CDAF4595A
365CDAF45959
Enable dance view
36709B4A5959
Unlock all characters
8672FFAC504F
8672FFAA504F
96608B42E99C
86608B42504F
Unlock all stages
96608B489692
86608B48504F

BUST-A-MOVE 2
Guide dots on all
levels
86578628595A
86578626595A
866985905959
No Hurry Up
86695694595A
Infinite credits
866397005961
Game area stays at
top of screen
866A9CA05961

BUST-A-MOVE 3DX
Change colour of
current ball Press
⊙, ⊙
66522758595E
0006516EEA80
0FFFFFFE841D
000800000000
90007612AC08
5656C968590A
040008AC0800
05AC0C0002AC
100009AC1400
089000000000
050000110000
0000FFFF0825
000000001900
0010140008A0
050008341400
08A00600083C
6E5108350000
08950900053C
5ED8A5340000
A280FFFE0934
060009150000
000001004220
090009340200
491400000000
08000234FFFD
093406000915
00000000FFFF
422000000934
020049140000
000001000234
0000A2A00400
088C1000098C
00701A400C00
028C00388040
080040030800
058C00000000

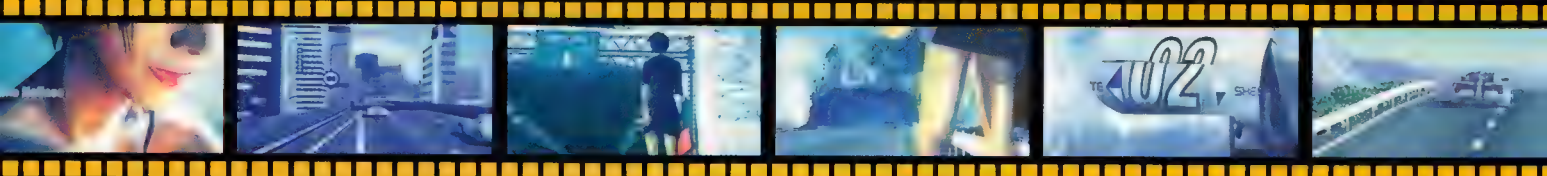
CARDINAL SYN
Unlock all characters
B6685756595A
1674D1605A5A

CASPER
Infinite health
867314DC5A46
Infinite fools gold
865B3EA4594F
Infinite iron keys
865B3E9C594F
Infinite brass keys
865B3EA0594F

CASTLEVANIA
Keep Alucard's items
865D1A6859D3
865D1A68596A
865D1A68597D
865D1A68595F
865D1A685992
865D1A6859A0
All Relics
965DD0CC5A59
B6715756595A
165DD0CC5A59

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

At the heart of every development in PlayStation history, there has been a place for the *Ridge Racer* series, but since the racing genre was turned on its head by *GT* and *TOCA 2*, there has been little tolerance of the arcade racer by users and press alike. Of course, it only took the fourth instalment of the series to return to favour. Ridge Racer Type 4 is, quite simply, the best looking driving game to date, but it doesn't get by on graphics alone. Here's a low down on the tracks, the cars and the secrets to help you get to grips with the slippery devil that lurks in the soul of every Ridge Racing machine.



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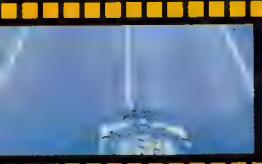
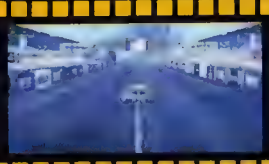
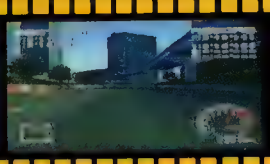
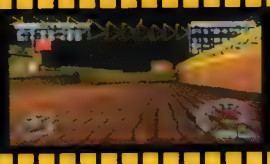






Welcome to the world of Ridge

GETTING ROUND

The cars are split into two types: drift and grip. The drift cars have a larger turning circle than the grip cars. Although, unlike Rage Racer, this isn't quite as obvious, since the difference in turning ability has been decreased.

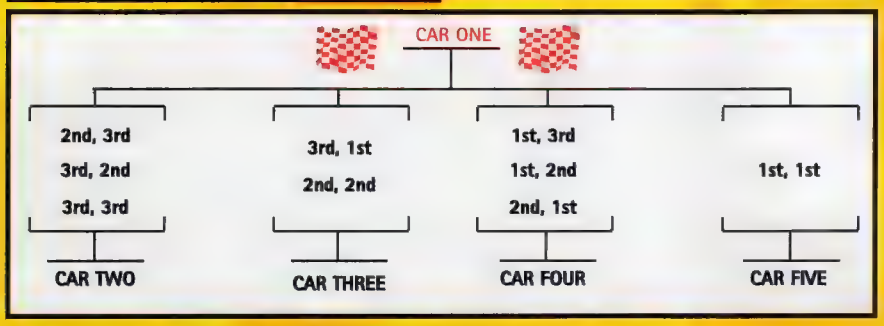
To get round the sharper turns you have to get your car to slide. How you do this depends on which type of car you're driving as both types require different methods. Sliding does cause a loss of speed, but not as much as hitting a barrier or wall.

CARS GALORE

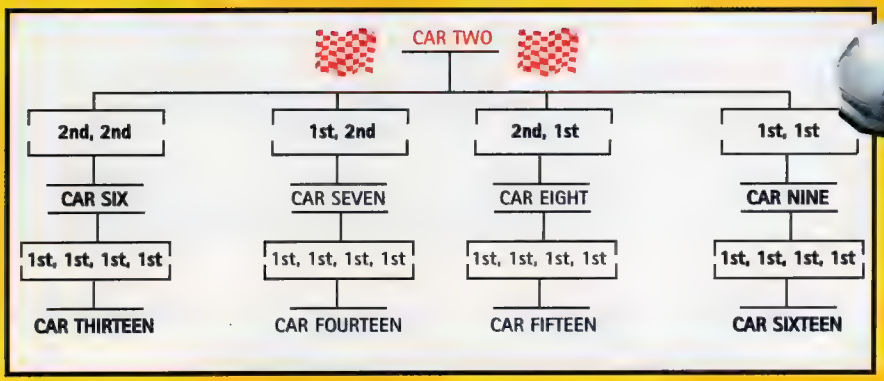
Unlocking cars is simply a case of completing the Grand Prix season. What is not so simple is getting all of the cars. The cars are released depending upon your finishing position in each race. There are 20 cars available from each of the four manufacturers, and each manufacturer can be part of any of the four teams. Do the maths and you get a total of 320 cars (4 x 4 x 20) to collect.

These charts show the cars and what finishing positions are required to get each one.

HEAT ONE



HEAT TWO AND FINALS



POWER SLIDING: DRIFT CARS

METHOD A

1. Release the accelerator to allow revs to drop.
2. Steer into the corner.
3. Accelerate hard just after steering.
4. Steer left and right to control the slide.

METHOD B

1. Steer into the corner.
2. Release the accelerator and tap the brake.
3. Accelerate hard.
4. Steer left and right to control the slide.

All sharp corners can be taken in this way although some corners can be negotiated without sliding. Instead, just use the brake until the car stops drifting.

POWER SLIDING: GRIP CARS

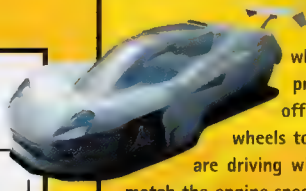
METHOD

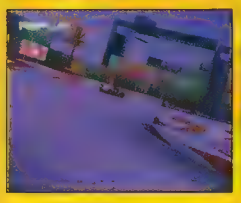
1. Steer into the corner.
2. Hit the brake whilst still accelerating.
3. Release the brake when the car slides and can clear the bend.

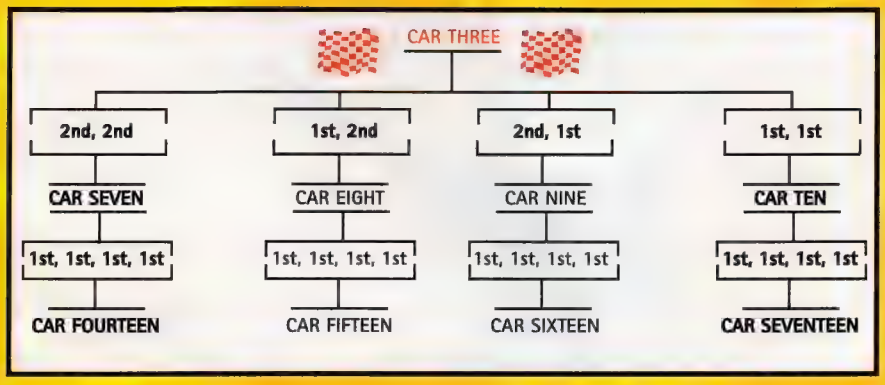
Grip cars don't slide as much as the drift cars, but they can clear sharper corners without the need for sliding or braking.

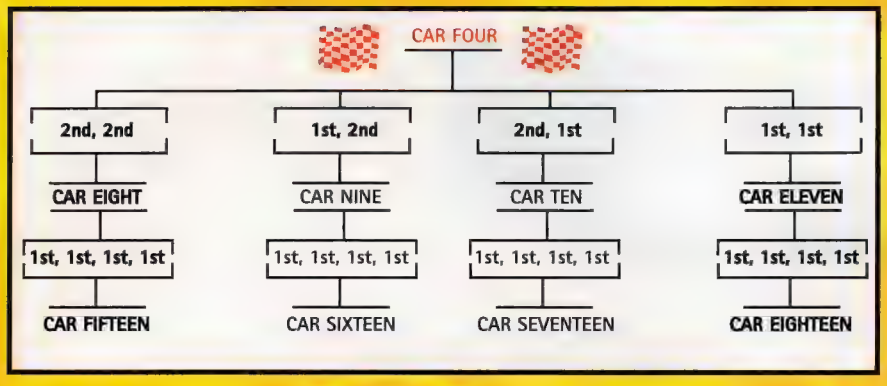
OVERSLIDING

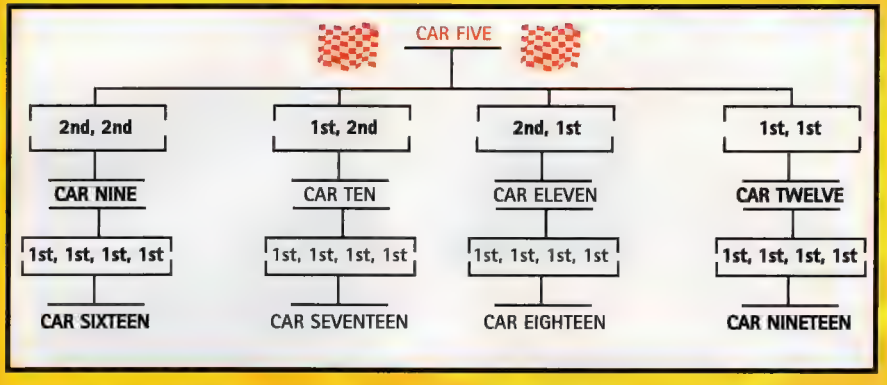
When driving the faster drift cars, there is a tendency for the power slide to continue longer than required. If this happens, you can hear the engine screaming as the wheels spin. To counteract this problem straighten the car and lift off the accelerator to allow the wheels to grip again. Alternatively if you are driving with manual gears, shift down to match the engine speed to the road speed.

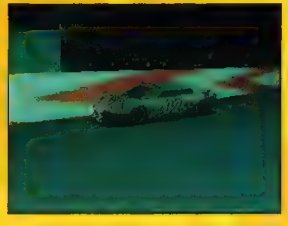


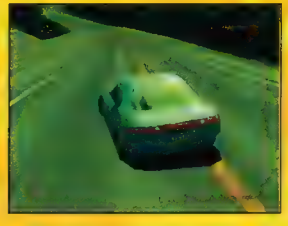






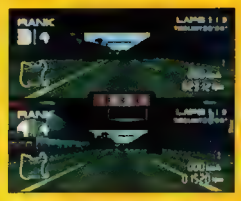


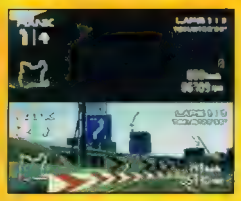




HOT FOURPLAY ACTION

Tired of the one player game? (Yeah right!) Bored of whipping your mate's butt? Well, get yourself a link cable and two PlayStations set up and get yourself some top four player Ridge Racer-style action. It's much more fun fighting against human opponents, and beating them!





QUICK ROUTE TO THE CARS

With some clever use of a memory card you can get all 19 cars in no time at all. Just follow this guide and you're there. (S means save your game and L means load it back in).

HEAT 1	HEAT 2	CARS RECEIVED
3rd, 3rd S	2nd, 2nd	1, 2, 6, 13
L	1st, 2nd	1, 2, 7, 14
L	2nd, 1st	1, 2, 8, 15
L	1st, 1st	1, 2, 9, 16
2nd, 2nd	1st, 1st	1, 3, 10, 17
2nd, 1st	1st, 1st	1, 4, 11, 18
1st, 1st	1st, 1st	1, 5, 12, 19

By completing the Grand Prix just seven times you get all 19 cars for that team/maker combination. This means that completing the Grand Prix 56 times (8 x 7) you can get 304 of the cars contained within the game.

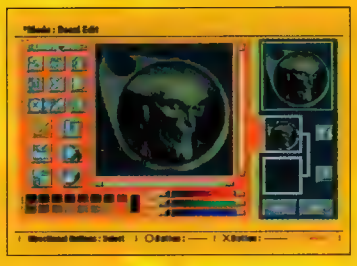
EXTRA TRIAL MODE

After completing the Grand Prix mode you get an extra option at the bottom of the main menu. This allows you to go head-to-head against the hidden cars. You can only race with cars of the same maker which you've unlocked in the Grand Prix mode. These extra cars are unlocked once you've beaten them (which isn't easy) and they appear as car 20 in the garage.

STICKER DESIGNS

In the garage menu you can select stickers for your car and even design your own. Here's the list of stickers supplied with the game.

NO.	STICKER
00	Custom
01	Armadillo Racing
02	Bosconian
03	Baraduke
04	Dragon Saber
05	Black Knight
06	Galaga
07	Galaxian3
08	Blackball
09	Pointblank
10	Klonoa
11	Metro Cross
12	Mappy
13	Ordyne
14	Sky Kid
15	Starblade
16	Techno Drive
17	Yoshimitsu
18	Thunder Ceptor
19	Lady in armour
20	World Stadium 2
21	Reiko Nagase – D.R.T.
22	Reiko Nagase – M.M.M.
23	Reiko Nagase – P.R.C.
24	Reiko Nagase – R.T.S.



Note: To get the last four stickers you must complete the Grand Prix with each team and win every race.

NAMCO RANKING

Complete a time trial course, when you reach the 'Retry' menu press ▲ + ⊙ to get a password. You can then use this password on Namco's website to receive a ranking. Check out www.namco.com.

TRACKSIDE TIPS

MANUAL LABOUR

Using manual gears gives your car greater acceleration due to the better gear ratio and gear shift timing. Mastering the manual shift can improve lap times greatly.

ON THE GRID

On the start line, cane the accelerator and shift straight into second for a good start. Alternatively keep the revs at about 6000-7000 rpm, then floor it when the race starts.

THE EXTRA CARS

CAR NAME: ECUREUIL TYPE: GRIP

MAKER Age Sole

STAGE 04

TOP SPEEDS

D.R.T.	361 kph
M.M.M.	312 kph
P.R.C.	294 kph
R.T.S.	366 kph

DESCRIPTION

Despite the old-folks-electric-car look this thing shifts. This car has faster acceleration than any car in any game ever made and supplies enough G-force to make your ears bleed! Steering is complete dog, but who cares!

CAR NAME: VULCANO TYPE: DRIFT

MAKER Assoluto

STAGE 04

TOP SPEEDS

D.R.T.	360 kph
M.M.M.	356 kph
P.R.C.	358 kph
R.T.S.	357 kph

DESCRIPTION

Not so much a car as a hover craft with a turbine engine strapped on top. Pretty good acceleration at low end speeds but tapers off at high speed. Cornering can be tough due to its width and it slides around like a wet fish on a skating rink.

EXTRA STUFF

POINTLESS STUFF

Use the L2 and R2 buttons to turn the car wheels when selecting a vehicle.

While editing stickers, hold L1 and use the directions buttons for easier navigation around the menu bars.

Toggle the motion blur during a replay and the demonstration mode by pressing ▲.

MUSIC PLAYER:

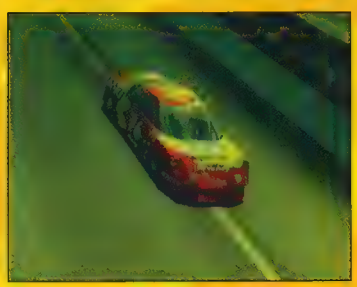
Use the following keys to bugger around with the music player settings.

←/→ – Changes the song currently played.
▲ – Changes the view between chase and in-car, each with and without motion blur.
⊙ – Repeat function.
SELECT – Turns soundtrack name on/off.

With motion blur on and in the chase view.
R2 – Adds Tint.
L2 – Removes Tint.
L1/R1 – changes the hue.

IN-CAR VIEW

L1/R1 – Turn camera.



CAR NAME: NIGHTMARE TYPE: DRIFT

MAKER Lizard

STAGE 04

TOP SPEEDS

D.R.T.	389 kph
M.M.M.	351 kph
P.R.C.	353 kph
R.T.S.	358 kph

DESCRIPTION
Amazing acceleration and a top speed beaten by only one other car. By far the quickest all round car in the game. But, and it's a big but, the back end has a mind of its own which makes power sliding a bit of a nightmare.

CAR NAME: UTOPIA TYPE: GRIP

MAKER Terrazi

STAGE 04

TOP SPEEDS

D.R.T.	395 kph
M.M.M.	382 kph
P.R.C.	399 kph
R.T.S.	387 kph

DESCRIPTION
Looks like a land speed record holder with a top speed to match. On a long enough straight this monster can reach a dizzying velocity. Since this rocket seems to be 100 yards long cornering is tricky, braking hard is the only option.

CAR NUMBER 321

The final car in the game can only be accessed when the full 320 racers have been unlocked. This is you chance to drive a Pac Man at high speeds, which is all of our dreams come true surely.

CAR NAME: PAC MAN TYPE: DRIFT

MAKER None

STAGE 04

TOP SPEEDS D.R.T. 242 kph

DESCRIPTION
Nothing special really, great looking but not much of a runner. Merely a gimmick car best used to humiliate your weaker mates in Vs mode.

THE CHEAT SEAT

Can't be bothered to drive through 56 or so Grand Prix challenges? Then use these handy Datel codes instead, it's so much easier!

UNLOCK EXTRA TRIAL
800F3754 0001

COMPLETE EXTRA TRIAL
800F375C 0101
800F375E 0101

UNLOCK ALL D.R.T. CARS
800F3710 FFFF
800F3712 FFFF
800F3714 FFFF
800F3716 FFFF
800F3718 FFFF
800F371A FFFF
800F371C FFFF
800F371E FFFF

UNLOCK ALL M.M.M. CARS
800F3720 FFFF
800F3722 FFFF
800F3724 FFFF
800F3726 FFFF
800F3728 FFFF
800F372A FFFF
800F372C FFFF
800F372E FFFF

UNLOCK ALL P.R.C. CARS
800F3730 FFFF
800F3732 FFFF
800F3734 FFFF
800F3736 FFFF
800F3738 FFFF
800F373A FFFF
800F373C FFFF
800F373E FFFF

UNLOCK ALL R.T.S. CARS
800F3740 FFFF
800F3742 FFFF
800F3744 FFFF
800F3746 FFFF
800F3748 FFFF
800F374A FFFF
800F374C FFFF
800F374E FFFF

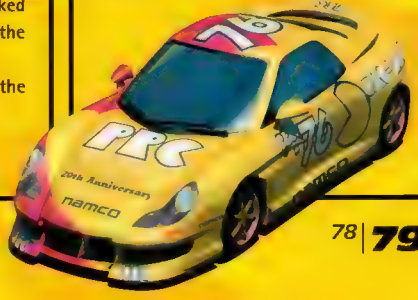
NOTE: THESE CODES ARE FOR THE JAPANESE VERSION OF THE GAME ONLY.

TRACKS

Initially only the first four tracks are available in Time Trial mode. The other four, plus the reverse tracks, are unlocked when you complete the Grand Prix mode. Getting round the courses quickly isn't just a case of putting the pedal to the metal, you need to know how to tackle each tricky turn to shave seconds off your lap time.

The learner (L) advice is intended for new drivers using the lower spec cars. The pro advice is for veterans driving the faster cars.

Belt up and turn the page, we're going for a ride...



HELTER SKELTER

COUNTRY: Japan LENGTH: 5220M

1 CORNER 1: 90° FLAT RIGHT-HANDER

DRIFT (LEARNER) – From left of track, power slide early keeping wide of the right-hand barrier.
DRIFT (PRO) – Get close to the right-hand barrier and power slide following the inside of the bend.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Stay in the centre and brake firmly whilst steering hard round the turn.
GRIP (PRO) – From the left, turn sharply and hit the brakes to slide.

2 CORNER 2: SHARP, NARROW LEFT-HANDER

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Stay in the middle and power slide just as you reach the turn.
DRIFT (PRO) – From the right, power slide hard and early to avoid the outside wall on exit.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Stay in the centre, steer sharply into the turn and brake briefly.
GRIP (PRO) – From the left, turn sharply and hit the brakes to slide.

3 CORNER 3: MEDIUM LEFT–RIGHT COMBO, UPHILL

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Power slide from the right and as you enter. Straighten up then power slide from the centre around the right-hand bend.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide from the right and keep sliding whilst steering to the right as you exit to get through the second bend.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Enter to the right and turn sharply using the brake to slide. Brake again to slow for the second bend.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep to the centre and brake whilst turning. Steer hard and power through the right-hander.

4 CORNER 4: MEDIUM RIGHT, TIGHTENING WITH SLIGHT INCLINE

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Power slide from the left as you reach the tighter section.
DRIFT (PRO) – Get close to the left and steer hard right as the bend tightens.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Steer hard from the left as the bend tightens.

5 CORNER 5: NASTY LEFT PRECEEDED BY A HUMP

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Brake to stay on the tarmac then power slide from the right.
DRIFT (PRO) – Move to the left and power slide left as you reach the hump to land facing out of the turn.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Brake if needed to prevent taking off, then steer hard left.
GRIP (PRO) – Just before you reach the hump, stop accelerating, brake hard and steer left. Keep steering and accelerate when you land.

6 CORNER 6: RIGHT-HAND BEND WITH A SHARP ENTRANCE

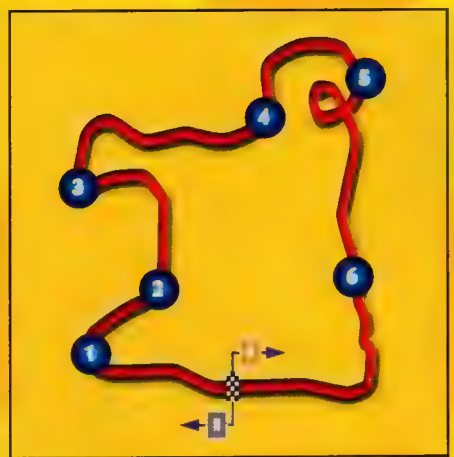
DRIFT (LEARNER) – Power slide from the left towards the inside of the bend. Line up straight upon exit.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide hard from the right keeping to the inside. Straighten early and accelerate away.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep to the inside and turn hard right. Dab the brake when you start to drift.
GRIP (PRO) – Enter on the left and steer hard right to cut towards the apex. Hit the brakes to slide and keep a good line.

WONDERHILL

COUNTRY: Japan LENGTH: 6686M

1 CORNER 1: LONG RIGHT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Move to the left and power slide out wide all the way.
DRIFT (PRO) – Tuck in to the right and power slide, following the inside line.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep wide and brake hard to slide.
GRIP (PRO) – Stick to the inside, stab the brake and slide wide.



2 CORNER 2: MEDIUM LEFT WITH STEEP INCLINE

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Dab the brake and cut the corner near to the inside. Get in the centre and power slide early staying central.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide early from the left, moving wide on the exit.
GRIP (PRO) – Go wide on entry and cut across the apex without braking.

3 CORNER 3: TIGHT RIGHT-HANDER

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep to the left and ease off the gas. Power slide hard right just before entry and go fairly wide.
DRIFT (PRO) – From the left, power slide very early to get close to the apex, but don't go too wide.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Stop accelerating and brake hard on approach. Steer firmly and floor it as you go round.
GRIP (PRO) – Stay central, keep accelerating. Brake late and hard whilst turning sharply.

4 CORNER 4: MEDIUM LEFT – RIGHT COMBO

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Power slide round the first bend, recover grip and steer round the second.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide hard from the right, steer back to the right to slide through the second bend.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Stay in the centre, apply the brake and steer gently through. Dab the brake again for the second corner.
GRIP (PRO) – Move to the right and steer hard on approach. Tap the brake to get round the right-hander.

5 CORNER 5: SMALL HUMP TO LONG, DOWNHILL RIGHT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep to the right and power slide when you reach the red sign. Straighten before the tunnel.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide to the right just before the hump then regain grip. Power slide again just before the red sign.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Steer hard right for the hump. Keep to the inside and use the brake when the car drifts.
GRIP (PRO) – Ease off for the hump and keep to the right. Use the brake to slide just after passing the sign.

6 CORNER 6: TWISTY SECTION TO SHARP RIGHT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep straight to cut through the bends. Ease off before the sharp right and power slide as you enter.
DRIFT (PRO) – Cut through the bends and power slide to the left for the last bend. Steer right to flick the back end out for the sharp right at the bottom..
GRIP (LEARNER) – Cut the corners and ease off slightly for the last right turn.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep as straight as possible, hit the brakes if required for the final right-hander.

EDGE OF THE EARTH

COUNTRY: USA LENGTH: 5665M

1 CORNER 1: MEDIUM UPHILL RIGHT

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Follow the inside wall allowing the car to drift on exit.
DRIFT & GRIP (PRO) – Start on the left and cut across the corner. Use light braking to avoid the outside wall on the left.

2 CORNER 2: RIGHT-HAND HAIRPIN

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep central and power slide early. Straighten up quickly to avoid over sliding.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide late and wide, shifting the car to match the exit angle.
GRIP (PRO) – Approach on the right, brake hard and turn sharply.

3 CORNER 3: EASY RIGHT TO MEDIUM LEFT

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Lose speed if necessary and keep close to the insides of the bends.
DRIFT (PRO) – Keep to the inside of the right-hander and power slide gently through the left-hand bend.
GRIP (PRO) – Start on the right and cross to the right to meet the apex of the second turn. Tap the brake for control when the car starts to drift outwards.

4 CORNER 4: MEDIUM LEFT FOLLOWED BY A SHALLOW CHICANE

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Use the brake and steer hard around the initial bend. Straighten up to clear the chicane.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide gently from the right and straighten as early as possible.
GRIP (PRO) – Move to the right and steer hard across the bend to line up for the following chicane.

5 CORNER 5: TWO 90° RIGHT-HANDED BENDS

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Power slide gently round the first bend staying central. Loss of speed allows easy navigation of the second turn.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide from the left moving wide after the first turn. Regain grip and cut across from the left, skimming the inside of the second bend.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep wide and accelerate whilst braking until the car turns easily. Repeat for the second bend.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep to the left and brake firmly. Steer hard across the bend going wide when exiting. Cut across the apex of the second turn, this time without braking.

OUT OF BLUE

COUNTRY: Japan LENGTH: 5564M

1 CORNER 1: MEDIUM, DOWNHILL RIGHT-HANDED BEND

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep accelerating and hold the brake, steer hard to get round safely.
DRIFT (PRO) – Get close to the left and turn hard to cut across the apex. Keep steering to avoid the outside wall.
GRIP (PRO) – Approach in the centre and steer into the bend. Apply the brake to cause a slide bringing the car in line with the straight.

2 CORNER 2: FAIRLY STEEP HILL FOLLOWED BY SHARP RIGHT-HANDER

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep in the centre and power slide as the bend approaches. Steer to the left whilst sliding to straighten up.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide from the right very early, counter steer to prevent the rear end clipping the wall and straighten up.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Brake hard and steer into the bend. Keep accelerating and stay central, away from the barriers.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep to the left to start with and cut across sharply on entry. Brake hard to slide the back end out.

3 CORNER 3: ACUTE RIGHT-HAND TURN

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Power slide early from the left of the track.
DRIFT (PRO) – Release the accelerator very early and power slide heavily, keeping to the right. Counter steer to align with the next straight.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Slam on the anchors and steer hard when you enter the bend. Accelerate once clear.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep to the left and brake late and hard. Turn firmly to the right and power through.

4 CORNER 4: MEDIUM LEFT TO A HARD RIGHT TURN

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Steer through the left-hand bend and move to the left of the track. Power slide quite early and cut across the track and out of the turn.
DRIFT (PRO) – Approach from the right and use a light power slide around the first bend. Power slide heavily from the left to negotiate the tighter turn.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Steer gently through the first bend, dabbing the brake if needed. Get central and turn into the right-hander, use the brake to slide out.
GRIP (PRO) – Go wide and cut through the first bend. Turn hard right keeping close to the right of the track. Slide out wide by applying the brake.

5 CORNER 5: BLIND RIGHT-HAND CORNER

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Approach on the left and cut across through the apex. Braking isn't necessary but may help.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide gently, hugging the right-hand wall. Straighten early to avoid over sliding.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep to the right and tap the brake firmly to slide a little.

The track rejoins the Helter Skelter course for the last two bends, so see corners 5 and 6.

PHANTOMILE

COUNTRY: Japan LENGTH: 3012M

1 CORNER 1: LONG RIGHT WITH TIGHT EXIT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep close to the right and start to power slide as the bend tightens.
DRIFT (PRO) – Start a power slide before the turn tightens and slide towards the inside of the corner.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Stay to the right of the corner and release the accelerator, dab the brake to slide then power away.
GRIP (PRO) – Approach from the left and brake whilst steering hard before the turn sharpens.

2 CORNER 2: EASY LEFT TO MEDIUM LEFT TURN

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep wide for the initial turn then power slide gently from the right around the second.
DRIFT (PRO) – Start on the right then power slide heavily as you approach the first bend. Quickly counter and slide the car around both bends.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Ease off entering the turn then steer hard right when through the initial corner. Use the brake if needed to avoid the outside wall.
GRIP (PRO) – Skim the right-hand wall, apply the brake briefly and skim the left-hand wall as you enter the left turn. Slide wide when exiting.

3 CORNER 3: HAIRPIN RIGHT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Stop accelerating early, power slide when the you reach the apex of the bend. Swing wide and straighten up for the straight.
DRIFT (PRO) – Stay wide and power slide across the track, tight to the apex.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Get off the accelerator and turn hard as you approach the apex. Accelerate firmly and dab the brake to slide out.
GRIP (PRO) – Skim the wall on the left and cut across the apex of the bend. Steer hard and use the brake to slide.

4 CORNER 4: KINK TO THE LEFT WITH A LONG RIGHT ENDING WITH A MEDIUM LEFT

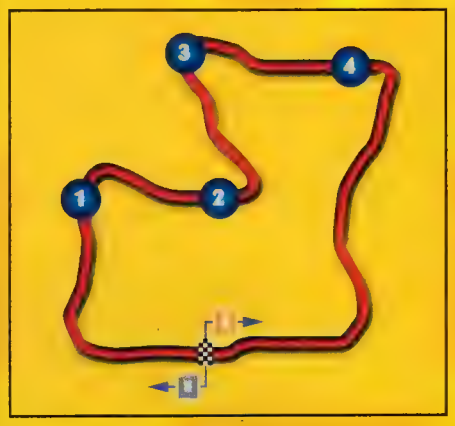
DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep clear of the walls through the kink and release the gas. Power slide keeping a central line to allow easier negotiation of the final left-hand bend.
DRIFT (PRO) – Keep close to the left and take a straight-ish line through the kink. Power slide early but not too wide, counter steer to swing the back out for the final straight.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep central through the kink. Release the gas and steer into the right-hander. Tap the brake to prevent a collision with the wall.
GRIP (PRO) – Keep close to the left and keep straight line through the kink. Power slide early but not too wide, counter steer to swing the back out for the final straight.

BRIGHTEST NITE

COUNTRY: USA LENGTH: 5868M

1 CORNER 1: LONG MEDIUM RIGHT-HAND BEND

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Line up just left of centre. Turn into the corner and briefly release the accelerator to slide, remember to counter steer.
DRIFT (PRO) – Keep to the left and power slide early to get the back end out. Straighten quickly for the tunnel section.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Brake hard and early to get your speed down. Steer from the centre and keep quite close to the right-hand wall. Accelerate hard once you're clear.
GRIP (PRO) – Approach from the left and brake very hard initially. Release the accelerator and glide round. Re-apply power when the car over-steers.



2 CORNER 2: STEEP DOWNHILL SECTION FOLLOWED BY A SHARP LEFT HANDER

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Brake hard to get your speed down, then floor it and power slide hard round. Counter steer quickly to regain grip.
DRIFT (PRO) – Release the accelerator very early, turn hard left from the centre of the track and re-apply the gas. Slide wide on the exit but steer back onto the road to avoid the curb.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Brake early to prepare for the corner. Turn sharply from the right of the track and brake again if needed to avoid the curb on the exit.
GRIP (PRO) – Release the accelerator and cut across the corner from the right. Tap the brake to slide wide then steer back to the centre.

3 CORNER 3: WIDE RIGHT-HAND TURN

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Keep in the centre and power slide gently as you enter the turn. Don't steer too hard to avoid over sliding.
DRIFT (PRO) – Power slide late from the left of the track, cutting in to hug the inside of the turn. Line up with the exit early to regain grip.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Approach from the left and steer hard towards the apex. The car should be capable of getting through without the need for braking.
GRIP (PRO) – Enter on the left-hand side and steer hard across the bend. Tap the brake to slide out wide for the exit.

4 CORNER 4: VERY STEEP HILL FOLLOWED BY A 90° CORNER TO THE RIGHT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Lift off the accelerator just after landing then power slide, steering hard to the right. Swing out for the exit to make use of the wide road.
DRIFT (PRO) – Keep power on until the last minute. Release the gas, turn hard and floor it.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Release the accelerator in mid-air and start braking just after landing. Steer hard into the turn, accelerating away using all of the wide exit.
GRIP (PRO) – Brake as soon as you land and turn very early. Once the car grips and turns, power out wide onto the straight beyond.

HEAVEN AND HELL

COUNTRY: Japan LENGTH: 6456M

1 CORNER 1: LONG RIGHT WITH MILD KINK

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Wait until well out of the tunnel before power sliding hard to the right. Keep central to get through the kink.
DRIFT (PRO) – Keep to the inside and power slide hard to swing the back out. Slide across the road to skim the fence on the other side and to get through the kink.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Approach from the left and steer hard right, brake if required to avoid drifting.

GRIP (PRO) – Keep in the centre and steer hard into the turn upon leaving the tunnel. Jab the brake to induce a slide, keeping the car tight to the inside line.

2 CORNER 2: SHARP LEFT FOLLOWED BY A HUMP

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Start off on the right-hand side and power slide early, keeping a central line. Get straight quickly before hitting the hump.
DRIFT (PRO) – Keep to the left and power slide early following the inside bank. Swing out wide on the exit using the dusty section. Get straight to avoid mishaps on the hump.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Get in the middle and brake hard on approach. Steer hard round using the wide exit fully, keeping straight for the hump.
GRIP (PRO) – Start on the right and cut across to meet the inside bank. Brake hard to slide out on the exit.

3 CORNER 3: ANOTHER SHARP LEFT

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Move to the right of centre and power slide round. Keep near to the yellow line. Don't go wide on the exit as the bank cuts in.
DRIFT (PRO) – Approach on the left and power slide early, keeping close to the inside. Move fairly wide on the exit but don't go off-road.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Move to the right and cut through the centre of the turn, don't stray too wide to avoid the bank.

GRIP (PRO) – Stay on the right of the track and steer hard into the bend. Tap the brake in mid-turn to slide round, taking care not to over slide.

4 CORNER 4: LONG DOWNHILL RIGHT WHICH TIGHTENS

DRIFT (LEARNER) – Stay on the right-hand side and power slide through the tight section when the red chevrons appear.
DRIFT & GRIP (PRO) – Keep close to the left-hand wall up until just before the chevrons, steer hard right to cut across the track and then keep against the right-hand bank. Brake gently in the event of a possible wall collision.
GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep to the middle of the road and go with the turn as it tightens. Use the brake if required to get through the exit turn.

SHOOTING HOOPS

COUNTRY: USA LENGTH: 3958M

1 CORNER 1: LONG BANKED LEFT

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Keep in either of the middle two lanes and steer gently round without braking.
DRIFT & GRIP (PRO) – Follow the inside lane keeping close to the wall, don't bother braking.

2 CORNER 2: EASY RIGHT

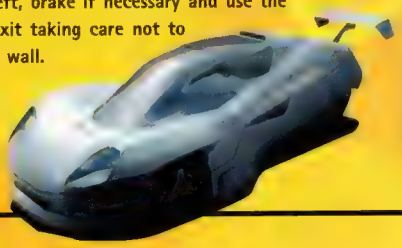
DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Start in the middle and cut to the inside as you enter the bend. Swing wide on the exit to keep up your speed.
DRIFT & GRIP (PRO) – Follow the left-hand wall and cut across the apex in a long sweep.

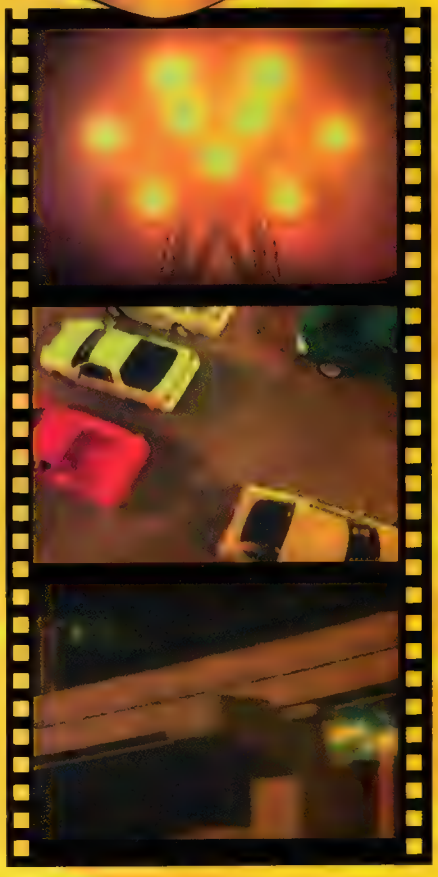
3 CORNER 3: MEDIUM LEFT

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Use the middle lane and gently follow the bend round.
DRIFT & GRIP (PRO) – Keep to the left and hug the wall all the way round.

3 CORNER 4: LONG TIGHTENING LEFT

DRIFT & GRIP (LEARNER) – Stay to the left of centre through the easy section, then cut to the inside to pass through the tighter, final bend.
DRIFT & GRIP (PRO) – Start on the left and move to the middle before reaching the tighter part. Steer hard left, brake if necessary and use the wide exit taking care not to hit the wall.





ROLLCAGE

This month's racing special continues with a blow-by-blow account through everything you need to know in order to master Rollcage, the fastest and most addictive future racer since *WipEout*. Take to four oversized wheels 'cause we're rolling out.

WHO'S DRIVIN' THIS MUTHA?

One of the first things you need to decide is who you want behind the wheel. There are six characters to choose from, each with strengths and weaknesses. Here's a guide to choosing the one best suited to your own needs.

LOTHAR

He has the look of a prehistoric man, but Lothar's an all-round performer with the same capability in acceleration as in strength and grip. Unfortunately his top speed suffers slightly and Lothar is relegated to the beginners club only.

But how are they on the track?
Lothar holds his own with the best, but you'll soon find yourself moving on to the better drivers and cars in no time.

Success rating 87%

LEON

With strength and excellent grip he holds the track well and gets you through collisions with minimal damage. Top speed is average and the acceleration is poor.

But how are they on the track?
Leon's strength is control. Speed suffers and it's very hard to get back into a race should anything go wrong. A good novice's choice.

Success rating 81%

TONY

Probably the best choice for the experienced player – excels in acceleration and strength, but the grip is low so be prepared to slip around a bit.

But how are they on the track?
Excellent, very fast and an ideal racer to pick if you're confident about racing to win. His grip should not worry the experienced player and the acceleration helps get you back up there with the pack if you should lose it.

Success rating 99%

JET

The car's grip is top notch, but every thing else is low. This is a real first timer's player only. Saying that, she's highly effective in a battle modes as the grip keeps you on track.

But how are they on the track?
Jet is a good choice for a battle mode but lacks the speed to be effective out on the race course.

Success rating 79%

RIA

This business suited babe has average acceleration, top speed and grip, making her a good choice. Be aware that lack of strength may affect her car's performance after a collision.

But how are they on the track?
Her lack of strength does affect performance after bashing the beast about. But if you have the skills, she's as good a choice as any.

Success rating 89%

LENNY

Rough and ready with excellent top speed and strength. The grip is medium, but acceleration is very low. A choice for the confident player who wants a challenge.

But how are they on the track?
Lenny is pretty much as able to win as any of the rest. Though his acceleration may be low, the top speed makes up for it. The grip is lousy, but let's face it, you're probably gonna' crash no matter what you do.

Success rating 88%

TRACK GUIDE

These are general guides to help you gain vital pre-race knowledge before taking to the track. Plus we expose all the shortcuts and alternate routes we've located. Try going into a time attack mode and practice driving around the relevant track using the guide to assist you.

TRACK INDEX

NEOTO CITY: Park Life, Cross Over and Flood Zone.
HARPOON ISLANDS: Paradise, Daytona, Smugglers, Road Works and Super Bowl.
SAPPHIRE SPRINGS: G-Force, Area 52 and Skid Pan (testing area).
OUTWORLD: Contact, Frontier, Eruption and Aftershock.

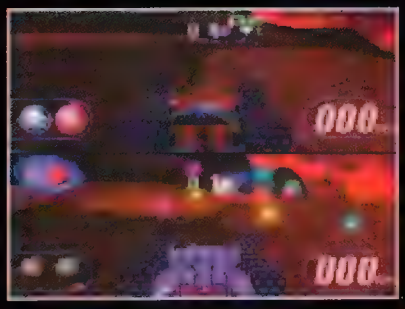
*= refers to the location of a shortcut or alternate route available. See 'Shortcuts/Alternate routes' below the relevant track.

DEATHMATCH – NEOTO:

This rooftop battle is littered with pick-up items. You must try to hit your opponent with the Tri-Missiles. First one to gain 15 hits on the other player wins.

PLAYER'S TIP

Stay central, let your opponent dart around and pick them off point by point.



NEOTO CITY

Welcome to the big smoke and our first stop – with fast tracks, fast tunnels and a whole load of skyscrapers to drop. But don't worry, we can guide you through every turn from start to finish.

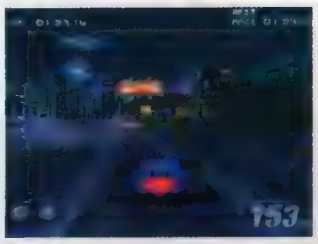
PARK LIFE

The first right has lighted indicators warning you of danger to the right. Take the right turn and go through the tunnel on the left. Out of the tunnel it's uphill and around a long and fairly sharp turn to the left. As you come downhill again, there's an entrance* to a tunnel. Make sure you're central as you don't want to collide with the sides.

This tunnel takes you around to the right and into another tunnel turning right. Then it's an uphill straight to the finish line.

DANGER AREAS

The tunnel entrance – staying central on entry is critical to avoid a collision.



*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

Before going down into the tunnel, drive to the right of the entrance (onto the grass). Follow the lights around to another tunnel entrance that brings you back out onto the main track just before the finish line.

1ST PLACE HOMING MISSILE

What is it? Fire this baby off and it homes in on the front runner – watch the fireworks.

Effect on others: You're in first place, everything's cool then... Wham! Meat waffle.

Effect on you: If you're stupid enough to fire this monkey off when you're the one in first place then get ready to fly.

What to do if on the receiving end? Evasive manoeuvres, the shield pick-up will protect you best of all. Or hit those brakes and let some other sucker through to get whacked, then breeze past into first again.

CROSS OVER

A little more tricky to negotiate, especially in racing. You start going up a hill and through a short right turn to a straight*. This short straight leads to a long fast right (use the curved wall on the outside to maintain high speed). This leads into a tunnel that turns left then right to a bumpy straight downhill – a speed-up at this point isn't recommended – if keeping control is a problem, slow down slightly.

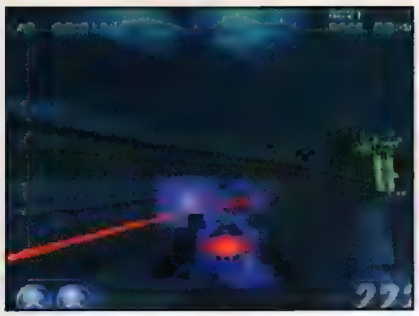
This opens out into two 'Y' sections. Avoid crashing into the central reservation. This leads into another tunnel that turns to the right sharply and then sharply left out to the finish line.

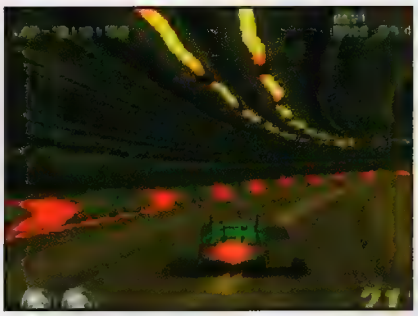
DANGER AREAS

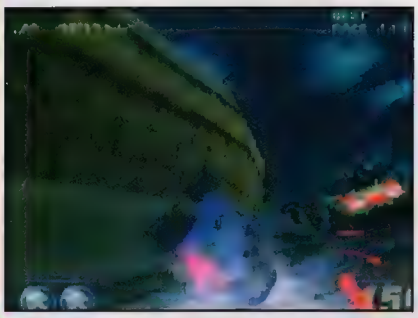
The bumpy straight downhill can spin you if taken at high speed.

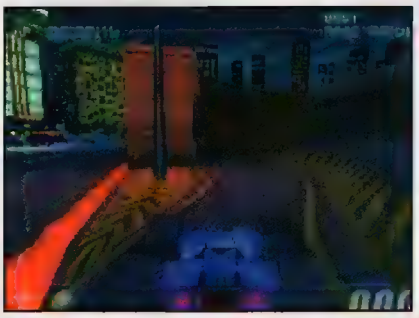
*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

Look to the right here and you'll see another road leading off that cuts the corner through a shopping arcade. Hit those pillars and watch the chaos! This brings you back out onto the main road.









FLOOD ZONE

The first tunnel takes you around a gentle left. Once out, head down the left side of the straight and jump through the gap on the left (as indicated by the lights). Now race down the straight with the water running down the centre. At the end, you must U-turn over the line and head back. Go through the sharp right and around the S-bend into the tunnel.

Use the tunnel to attain more speed so that when you hit the straight you're flat out. Now it's just a case of heading for the finish line.

DANGER AREAS

The U-turn – take the long straight quickly, but judge your distance and try to swing the car around over the line. Then accelerate away. Too much power towards the line after the long straight may cause you to crash into the barrier, losing vital seconds.

TEN ROLLCAGE TRICKS

1) Use the practice mode to attain better racing skills against an easy CPU competitor.

2) Speed is the key to victory. Hit the accelerator as close to the 1 (of the 3-2-1) as possible at the start to get off the grid at lightning pace. Use the blue speed arrows in the road to obtain more speed on the track.

3) Use the practice mode to practice all of the pick-ups available in the game.

4) Take it easy on the tracks you don't know well. You'll be surprised how well a little cautious driving pays off.

5) Use your weapons to maximum effect. For example, a Homing Missile may be something to hang on to for that critical last lap.

6) Master the shortcuts to save time. In hard mode these shortcuts become invaluable to your position and therefore league survival.

7) When you land hard and fast, it's easy to spin and wipeout. Try slamming on the brakes in mid-air and when you hit the ground again it's easier to regain control.

8) Use high walls and ceilings to maintain speed. Your vehicle was built for these special features... learn to use them and win!

9) When you're in first place watch out, those Homing Missiles may be creeping up behind you. Watch the first place icon – if it's flashing, then you know a missile is on the way. If it's flashing red and fast, then it's very close to impact. They'll shoot out in front first, but you can spot them coming by using the rear view mirror and act to avoid impact. Use a shield if you have one.

10) See those buildings? Knock out their supports to collapse them and you'll help stall those behind you with the debris.

PASSWORDS

Can't be bothered to get maximum league points, eh? Can't be bothered to win your way through to the other leagues, eh? Well okay, here are some passwords to skip the formalities and get to the bonus bits.

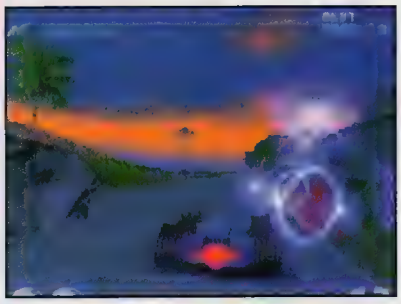
FAB I I DPL = Scorpio league
MDKGAHAE = Taurus league
EAFNLEAM = Mirror mode
BDEGNADM = All leagues
MCNGAOIE = Deathmatch Neoto/Harpoon
EEFNIEBA = Deathmatch Neoto/Harpoon, mirror mode and Super Bowl on Harpoon Islands
MCNCBCHE = All the above
KKKJBCFA = All hard leagues available

HARPOON ISLANDS

Welcome to Harpoon Islands. A whole lot brighter than the smog of the city, but by no means easier.

PARADISE

A fast start will not affect your ability to take the first gentle turn to the right. You can cut across the grass if you need to avoid the starting traffic. Hit the straight with your acceleration at full. The dip may elevate the car, but take the left for the turn to the right.



If the last turn was taken quickly, your acceleration up the hill along this straight will climb substantially (this is the best point to use a speed-up). There's a building* on the right if you want to destroy it (drive into the three pillars to collapse it). The next long turn to the right can be easily taken at high speed. Keep accelerating downhill along the straight and left to the finish.

DANGER AREAS

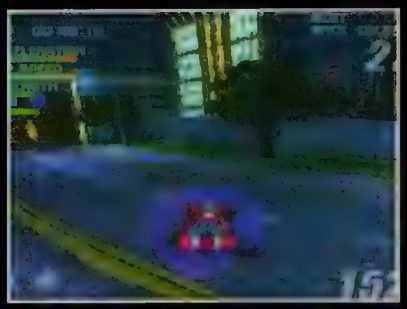
The only real danger is a high speed entry and exit to the shortcut.

*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

Go to the right of this building, then behind it and through the large bush ahead. Follow the tunnel around into a small canyon. This leads you out to the track again, just before the finish line.

SHIELD

What is it? Duh.
Effect on others: Means the little buggers can't blast you... for one hit anyway.
Effect on you: You're impenetrable to the tune of one hit... savour the moment.
What to do if on the receiving end? Don't waste your time firing unless you've got two missiles – one to disable the shield and one to whack 'em with.



WARP-CIRCLE

What is it? Fires a circle of power that transports other cars back several positions.
Effect on others: If driven into, you're transported down a couple of places.
Effect on you: It's unlikely to catch the sharper eyed Rollcager, but should you fall foul of it then it's an uphill struggle to get back to your previous position.
What to do if on receiving end? Use evasive manoeuvres to avoid contact. Very easily seen coming. Use a shield if you have one.

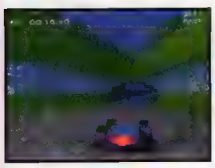
DAYTONA

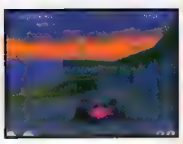
Your first turn is through a short tunnel up a hill to the right. Your car jumps slightly at the peak (more so if at full speed), so be aware when coming around here again. The downhill turn to the right brings you to a steep uphill route and a beach to the left (experiment with what you prefer).

This straight brings you to another mild right turn which can be negotiated at high speed. The straight leads to a fast high jump. If you have a speed-up option you can use it, but you must try to keep the car straight on landing. This is an ideal item pick-up area.

DANGER AREAS

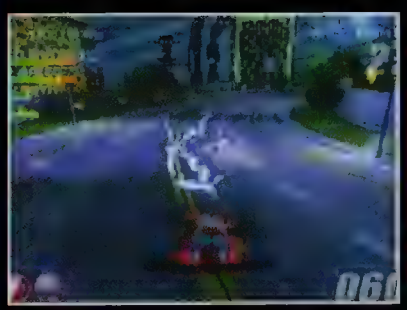
The high fast jump may severely spin the car on landing. Try staying off the blue speed arrows and/or brake on landing to gain control.





ELECTRIC SHOCK

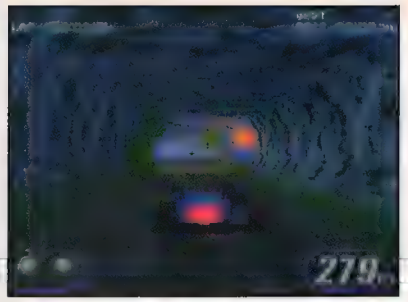
What is it? Bolts of electric pulse shock the cars that get in front of them... lovely.
Effect on others: Steering goes haywire and the car goes mental for a few seconds.
Effect on you: None, just watch them fry.
What to do if on receiving end? Evasive manoeuvres, just get the hell out the way. Use a speed-up or brake and drop behind. Use a shield if you have one.



SMUGGLERS

The tunnel you first enter takes you through a mild turn to the left, then out and into another tunnel to the right. Exit this turning left and use the wall to maintain speed. The next tunnel turns to the left slightly and then out to the right – this brings you along a straight. This straight leads to a winding canyon that leads to a large cave.

In this cave, stay central (on the ramp) and get the pick-up items in the middle. Try to keep straight for the exit. Follow the road around to the left and stay over to the right to go under the loader near the ship, or go left and turn back to the right, to hit the finish line.



DANGER AREAS

In the cave, stay central. If you come off the track here it's a hard recovery that takes up valuable seconds.

TRI-MISSILE

What is it? Fires three missiles at targets straight ahead. Anything in the way gets whacked.

Effect on others: These three twisting sisters blow the hell out of cars, trees and buildings... 'ave some of that!

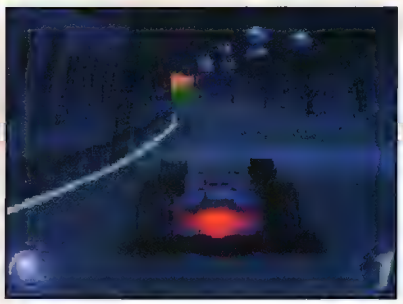
Effect on you: Very high in the air, spinning in an explosion... not a good thing really, unless you're into that sort of thing.

What to do if on receiving end? An evasive manoeuvre should get you off the hook. Powerful as they are, the Tri-Missiles are incredibly inaccurate.

MIRROR MODE

This simply reverses all the tracks, offering a fresh challenge should you be bored. It's useful if you just can't come first on a particular track, as reversing may help succeed. To get the mirror mode, you must complete all three leagues on easy.

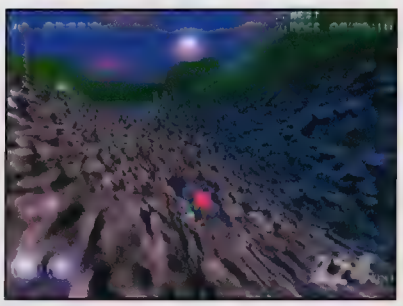
ROAD WORKS



The first tunnel is reasonably straight and goes uphill. Once you get out of the tunnel, cruise down the hill and stick to the left if you want to avoid the hole in the road. Now take the long left around to another hole in the road (stay left to avoid it). Go through another tunnel that brings you downhill to a sharp left, with several items to collect. Now head toward the finish line.

DANGER AREAS:

In a word, holes! If you should fall in one, try to exit carefully/slowly. Staying left is the best way to avoid them all together.



SINGLE MISSILE

What is it? Fires one missile at any target ahead (mostly buildings etc., not cars). When you have one, targets appear, fire and the missile hits the locked area.

Effect on others: Most effective in bringing buildings down on the fella behind you.

Effect on you: Very unlikely to strike you, but the blast may effect you visually for a brief time. Buildings falling down can be a hazard.

What to do if on receiving end? Use evasive manoeuvres to avoid debris. Try a shield when driving through a falling building.

SUPER BOWL

A nice open oval track to burn around with no need for brakes. Take your beast right up to the top of the track upside down! It is fun in two player mode to see how much speed you can get out of these beasts. You don't need me to tell you... just put your foot down!

DANGER AREAS:

None, this is a test track.

SAPPHIRE SPRINGS

Ice and snow, two words that drivers fear, unless of course your name is Magnus and you live in Iceland. Stay alert to driving conditions and watch your surfaces. Try to keep off the snow or a crash will send you spinning out of control.

AREA 52

There's something in the sky, but don't take your eye off this fast track. From the start go through the first tunnel*, choosing the left side for the normal track. From the tunnel, you appear into an open area occupied by explosive tanks and strange aircraft patrolling the sky. On entering the next tunnel you take a slight S-turn then come out to face a downhill turn to right past a grounded submarine.

This leads you around into a mini tunnel that sends you downhill on a winding road. There's a long right turn that can be taken at high speed before the finish line.

DANGER AREAS

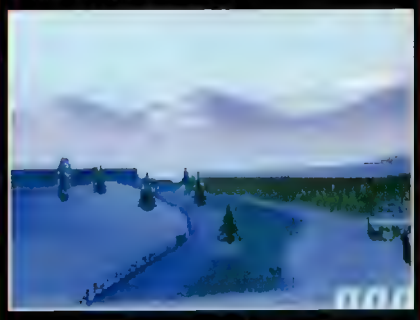
Crates block the right tunnel from the starting line (very explosive). Also watch out for the tanks on the open ground sections.

*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

Take the right tunnel for an easier ride. This tunnel is blocked by explosive boxes that you should either let someone else run into or take out with a missile.

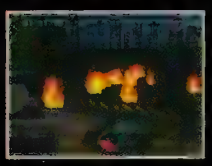
LOOK WHAT WE DID... AT AREA 52

Rollcage throws you about all over the place. In Area 52 we managed to get up on top of the mini tunnel. How did we do that? Well, go to the right side of the tunnel and accelerate up the wall. This should fling you onto the roof.



DEMOLITION DERBY

There's more to Rollcage than just going so fast around a track you wet your Teletubby underpants. You've got one powerful little monster at your fingertips – it can take out a building at the well-timed touch of a button.



Take out all the pillars on this building to drop it like a bad habit or an ugly girlfriend (errr... whatever!).

These rocks are asking for a good kicking. Give 'em hell, but do be aware that debris bashing activities slow you down.

Take out the pillars and drop the sky-train – well, they should've taken the bus, eh?

G-FORCE

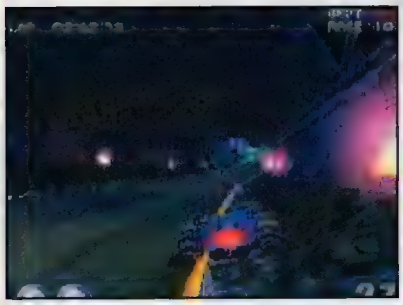
This cold-looking track begins with an uphill right turn into a tunnel. You can make it upside down and get down again if you're quick enough. Then it's an uphill straight past a couple of buildings* on the left and a sharp right-hand turn. Turn right again and head downhill toward the finish.

DANGER AREAS

The exit from the shortcut is bumpy, so take it easy on the entry and exit.

*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

These buildings on the left hide another tunnel that takes you under the main track and cuts the next right turn. Super, eh?



SKID PAN

Accelerate down the straight and use the high side to take a long icy right turn. This brings you to a drop off into a tunnel so slow slightly for the fall. This winding tunnel of ice leads you outside again. Watch out for the moving drill machine and enter the tunnel ahead. This'll lead you through a winding halfpipe road back down toward the finish line on the long straight.

DANGER AREAS:

The first tunnel entrance, slow before the drop off.

*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATE ROUTE:

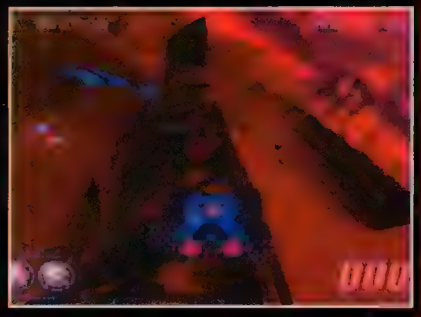
On the straight (the starting point) there's an alternate higher track to the right. Not much use but an alternate route, should you want one.

OUTWORLD

Outworld combines explosive scenery with rugged landscapes to race around. Watch out for the hot lava and space ships.

LOOK WHAT WE DID... AT FRONTIER

At Frontier we managed to get right up on the edge through a missile explosion and a speed-up combination.
As you can see from the screenshots, there's a view on the other side of the alien planet you're racing on.



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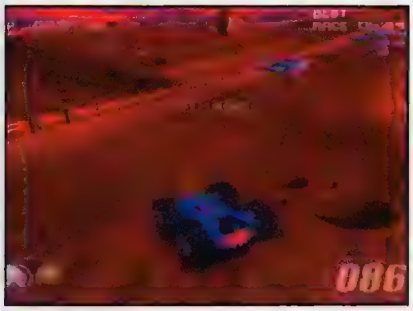


This long right turn uphill leads down again to a 'Y' in the road. This shouldn't require any braking, just keep your speed high as you hit the long right ahead. Use the high sides to increase speed, but don't fly off the end! Try to stick to the dark path in the road.

This goes around to a long right and a low road. Go into this low road and under the mini tunnel (or steer right or left of it). This jumps you slightly into the last right turn and past the finish line.

DANGER AREAS

At the high sided right turn, follow the dark brown track. Then at the mini tunnel section, don't fall into it at high speed!

ERUPTION

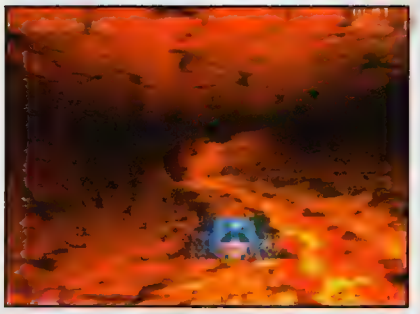
From the start, climb up the hill and then down to the left, past the volcano and left into the tunnel. The safest way to negotiate the tunnel is to follow the lava stream. This takes you out onto a straight and uphill past a pool. There's a sharp turn left at the top, leading to another straight past a train tunnel*. Keep the speed up as you go past this to the finish line.

DANGER AREAS:

Watch out for that train, its explosions don't help your cause.

*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATIVE ROUTE:

Go right and into the train tunnel for some explosive results!



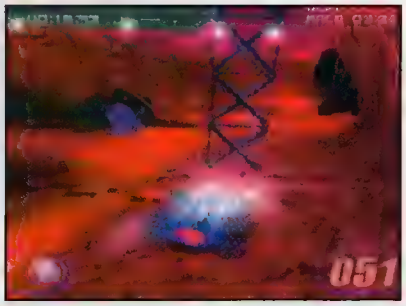
AFTERSHOCK

The first right has three large obstacles to avoid, so stick to the right or lose time. This brings you around onto a straight, so keep the speed up as you enter the tunnel ahead. Once you come to the red lights, stay central for the drop. This drop may throw your car around a bit, but use the ⊙ to face the right way if needed. If you still have problems, brake slightly before the drop-off. You flip over as you fall and end up facing the right way.

Accelerate out of the tunnel and stay to the right to avoid the de-railed train wreck*. Now accelerate up the straight and around to the right to cross the line.

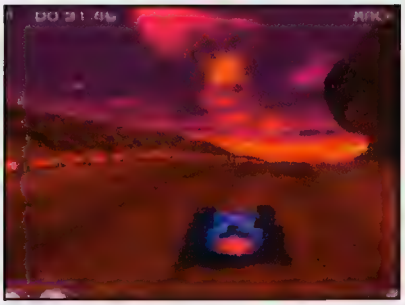
DANGER AREAS:

The drop-off, a high speed descent where you may collide into the wall above the lower cave entrance. Use your brake and slow down at the drop-off.



*SHORTCUT/ALTERNATE ROUTE:

Go left into the de-railed train wreck and into the cavern for some explosive results. Or try nudging the opposition into it!

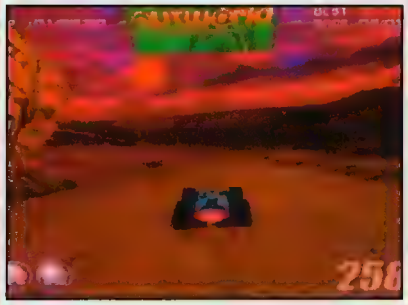


FRONTIER

Stay left and enter the tunnel that turns left to right downhill. There's a short straight before a sharp left leading to a longer straight. This long straight has three route choices. The first is the central ramp and narrow wall (dodgy at high speeds). Then there's the left and right sides (suitable for high speeds); both get you back up to the main track. This leads to a sharp right and left turn into the finish.

DANGER AREAS:

The central route of the three, a bumpy road that may throw you off.



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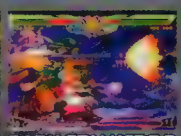
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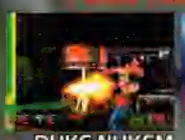
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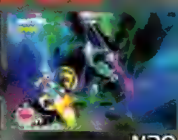
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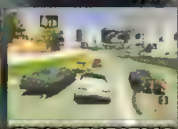
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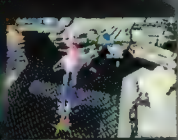
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Peripheral VISIONS

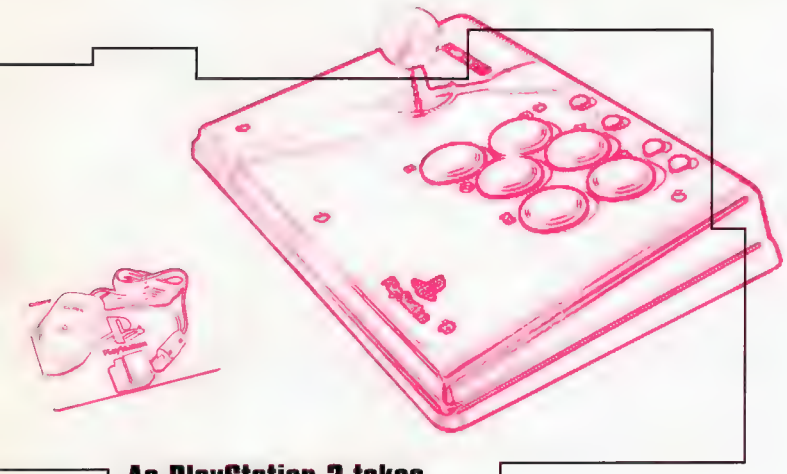
Most of you out there will have the requisite two joypads and a memory card which most games demand as the bare working minimum, and be aware of the more specialised bits of kit like the multi-tap, light gun and mouse which can be used to expand the potential and playability of certain games many times over. But what about the freakish and bizarre add-on margins, on the periphery (if you will) of good sense and practicality, which demonstrate the crazed insight required to be a Good Idea. Below are a few suggestions that we have come up with, followed by some truly far-out real-life gadgets that were, on the main, probably best left on the drawing board where they couldn't hurt anybody.

THE REGURGITATER

Considering the success of Codemaster's *MUSIC* it's only natural that a great deal of people are going to become tired of the game's built-in samples and want to travel the space-sound continuum looking for their own snippets of raw sonic matter. The solution to this could come in the form of an add-on box that would slot into the PSX's under-used parallel port and contain all the analogue-to-digital technology required to turn the PlayStation into a mini-sampler. Similar gizmos existed for the far less powerful Amiga and enabled that humble machine to be the driving force behind a lot of early jungle tunes, so there's no reason the PSX couldn't follow suit. While CD-quality 16bit sound is possible the only drawback would be the PSX's fairly limited amount of RAM which severely restricts the total amount of playback time available, a situation which could be side-stepped by sticking a few capacious SIMMs into the add-on to give you some more memory space to play with, plus hopefully the ability to retrieve sounds from a bank once the console has been switched off. Combined with an upgraded version of *MUSIC* all we would need to complete the set-up would be a plug-in keyboard to make inputting multi-note riffs easier.

SPLIT SCREEN SPLITTER

Whilst the split screen option is all well and good there's still nothing quite like playing two-player games on your own personal telly, away from the prying eyes of your rival and a restricted letterbox-like view. However the expense of buying two games and hassle of getting two PlayStations in the same room prohibits many from realising this joy in the form of a serial link-up game, a problem solved by the ingenious Split Screen Splitter. This would plug into your AV port and have the effect of bisecting the TV picture horizontally and sending each half to its own SCART socket, re-sizing the picture along the way slightly to take up more of the screen. While this is arguably a pretty rudimentary effect, options could be conceivably built into games to take advantage of the Splitter, although admittedly it would still be limited by the processing power of a single machine.



As PlayStation 2 takes core hardware boldly into regions never before explored, we turn an eye to the world of the add-on and ask the questions 'What if?' and 'Why?'

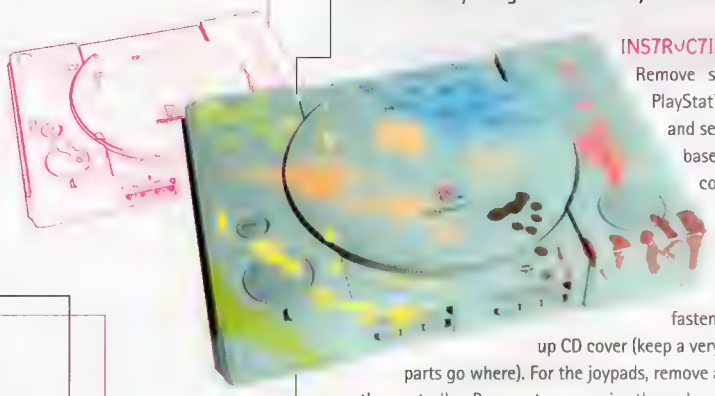
HOME RE-SPRAY KIT

Not so much a peripheral this one, more an *adjustment*. If you grow weary of the PlayStation's discreet yet unassuming elephant-grey veneer and fancy yourself a bit of a artiste, then this could be up your street. Below is a fairly comprehensive guide we have come by as to how to safely dismantle your PSX and then re-paint it in a new and thrusting manner that will wow your mates and surpass those crappy sticker kits. A few suggestions for designs include:

McLaren F1 car
Spitfire fuselage
Hippy flowers/Scooby Doo's Mystery machine
Native American warpaint
New York subway graffiti style
Warhole-esque

Of course we are too scared to attempt anything like this on our office consoles, but anybody out there brave enough to have a crack at remodelling their pride and joy and can prove it with photographic evidence will earn both our respect and some kind of impressive prize.

WARNING: Following these instructions to the letter will result in your PSX's warranty being so invalidated you won't be sure that it ever existed.



INSTRUCTIONS

Remove screws at the base of the PlayStation. Lift off the lid of the PSX and set the base carefully aside. The base contains the innards of the console, while the lid only consists of the circular cover and plastic buttons – OPEN, POWER, and RESET. In the lid, remove all the screws fastening the buttons and the pop-up CD cover (keep a very good visual memory of what parts go where). For the joypads, remove all screws on the underside of the controller. Be sure to memorise the order of layers inside the controller. It goes digital pad, hard 'spider' plastic then plastic D-pad. The controller will separate easily and you can remove all the components leaving only the plastic shells behind.

PAINTING

Prepare the PSX lid and controller parts by sanding them with a rough, then fine grain of sandpaper. This allows the paint to adhere itself to the plastic. Be sure to cover parts you do not wish to sand (such as the translucent 'green light' plastic). Buy a primer paint that will adhere to plastics. The spray-can will usually list what surfaces are applicable. Make sure it says 'For Plastic'. Primers are generally white or grey, and can be found in any hardware store. Prime the PSX in a mildly shady spot with little or no wind. Let the primer dry. Get out the paint of your choice. For spray paint, again, make sure it is OK with primer and plastic. For airbrush users, make sure your paint has a milk-like consistency. Strain it with a pair of tights or any other similar material. Make sure you've covered areas that you do not wish to paint with masking tape or clingfilm. Now spray away! Make even paint layers, 2-3 of them preferably. Allow the paint to dry fully before reassembling your PSX.

It's only a matter of time before someone takes these basic techniques and turns it into a commercial kit, replete with stick-on stencils and so forth, so remember you saw it here first, kids.

PSX CAMERA

Seeing how the humble and seemingly obsolete Game Boy gained a new lease of life with the surprisingly impressive Game Boy Camera, then why couldn't the PSX have its own full-colour high definition version? Admittedly its usefulness will be limited by the length of your power cable, but being able to mangle and manipulate the digital snaps with the huge power of the PlayStation would make up for the practical problems. Or perhaps a low-cost PSX Scanner would be more useful? Hmmm...

It'll Never Work

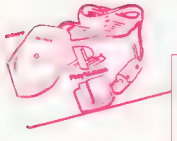
There are a good few accessories that seem as if they are made up, but in actual fact are the very real brainchild of some free-thinking individual. Despite them being only intermittently successful we nonetheless salute those responsible for trying to push the peripheral envelope where no-one has gone before.

THE WHEELS OF PLASTIC

Beatmania Control Deck

Produced by ACE7EC
Costs £7BA

A refugee from a dedicated coin-op cabinet this highly specialised plug-in is only of use with a single solitary game, Konami's Beatmania (see page 62 for a full review). Much like a simplified version of those hulking 'arcade stick' things this increases the size of target you have to hit, a vital addition when playing the frantic and frankly damn near impossible rhythm action game. The buttons are toughened to put up with the battering they will receive, plus arranged in a pattern that helps you keep track, although unlike using a joypad it does force you to use one hand for the switches and the other for the scratching wheel, making its ultimate practical desirability a matter of debate.



MIND YOUR HEAD

IBVA Tek Brainwave Analyser

Produced by IBVA Technologies
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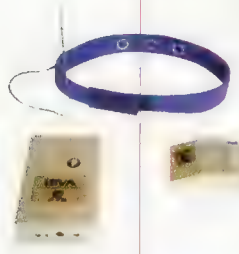
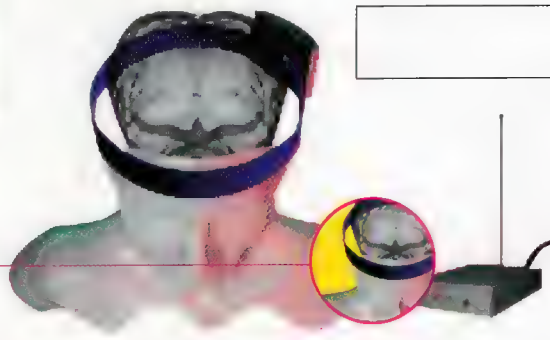
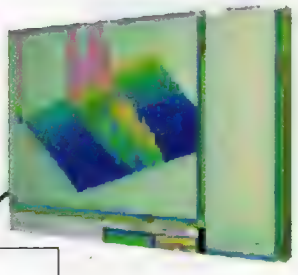
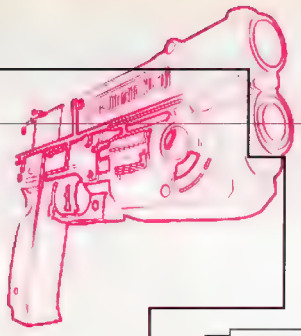


Controlling a computer by pure thought alone was previously restricted to science fiction films (particularly the seminal Clint Eastwood/Russian fighter plane 80s crap classic *Firefox*), or so we thought. However a group of bearded Americans have made cheeseball fantasy spring into life through their ingenious device named the IBVA, which incredibly can be used instead of a joypad to control your PlayStation! Despite our very polite and appreciative e-mails the company that created it were not keen to send us one to try out or indeed provide any real information on its workings beyond 'It reads real-time brainwave information and lets you assign that information to PlayStation joystick buttons or direction' From the photos it seems that it's possible to play *WipEout 2097* via the gizmo, an intriguing prospect, although of course we are unable to corroborate its practical effectiveness. If there's anybody out there who's tried out one of these we'd be very interested to hear whether it's any cop or not.

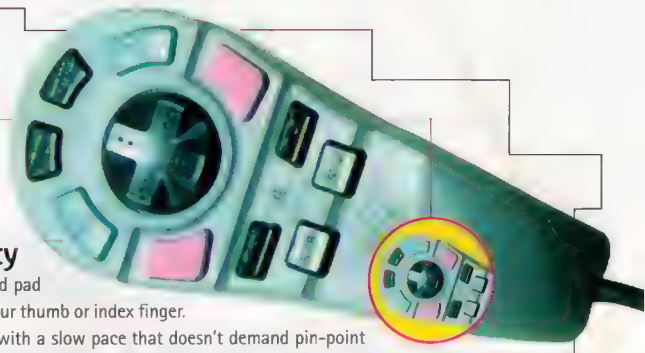




VISIONS



ONE-ARMED BANDIT



'Grip' One Handed Joypad
Produced by AGETEC
Costs £19.99

Ideal if you've had some kind of nasty farming accident and are short a limb, this ingeniously designed pad will nestle in the palm of one hand and allow you to press every button with your thumb or index finger. Probably best for RPGs and 'point and click' style games (or indeed anything with a slow pace that doesn't demand pin-point accuracy) it does allow you to pick your nose/drink booze/repel boarders with the other free hand. Not so hot for beat 'em-ups, unsurprisingly.

THROW DOWN THE GAUNTLET

The Glove
Produced by Reality Quest
Costs £49.99

Effectively a less convenient version of the above, this ill-fated monstrosity was incredibly given the Sony mark of approval during its short time on the shelves. Made from admirably tough components the idea was to use the angulatory movement of your wrist to steer, while the symbol and shoulder buttons fell neatly under your fingers. Of course it only suited hands of certain very specific dimensions and had a clunking action that made the successful playing of most games a touch impossible, not to mention the staggering fifty quid price tag. However it does confer the wearer with the gratifying impression of being part cyborg, so it's not all bad.

THEY'RE NOT BITING TODAY

Fishing Rod Controller
Produced by AGETEC
Costs £TBA

Tragically this inspired accessory is only suitable for a single solitary game that may or may not arrive in this country, *Bass Landing*, and AGETEC themselves are unable to provide us with one, much less give a firm release date. Nonetheless I'm sure you can tell that this is an inspired piece of kit that takes extreme specialisation to new and indulgent heights, with a dedicated reel mechanism and rod-like form to add that extra element of immersive realism, or something.

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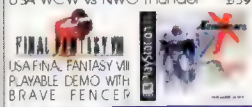

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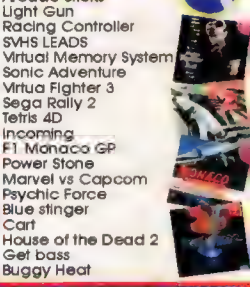

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LE MANS 24 HOUR COMPETITION

Although their mouth-watering endurance racing game Le Mans 24 Hours is still a couple of months away, those agreeable chaps at Eutechnyx have decided what you, the STATION reader, needs is some practice at controlling a dangerously high-speed vehicle before being let loose on the game proper. Thus they've kindly donated a unique radio controlled model of a race going McLaren F1 (worth over £700) that's decked out in genuine decals and livery for the lucky winner who can answer this question in the most satisfactory manner:

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Station

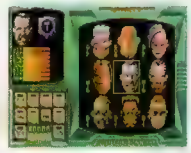
Your monthly handle on the changing face of PlayStation gaming

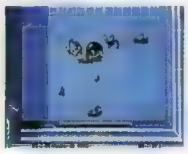
News Index: Speedball update – Metal Gear Solid sales hit records – PlayStation and the cultural revolution [page 100] WipEout 3, Rollcage 2, Tekken 3.5, sequels galore! [page 101] Codemasters make pocket footie – Top Shop game booths – Red Storm get Aironauts [page 102] Phantom Menace on way [page 103] Eye Candy [page 105]

SPEEDBALL FOR BREAKFAST

SPEEDBALL FOR LUNCH

In a move likely to cause uncontrollable bed-wetting amongst Amigaphiles, legendary '80s programming team the Bitmap Brothers has confirmed that it will be resurrecting its seminal violent future sport game for the PSX. In its two incarnations *Speedball* notched up sales of around one million copies, and was almost single-handedly responsible for this writer dismally failing his GCSE mocks back in the day. A constant clamour from the public and press for an update has finally prompted the Brothers to begin on a three-dimensional update, and already potential publishers are said to be 'rabid' to sign the game up. Ice cream! Ice cream!



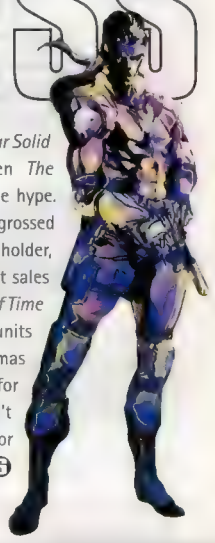


THE CHINESE CONNECTION

Apparently both Electronic Arts and Ubi Soft are looking to make inroads in the potentially lucrative gamesplaying territory of China. Despite the charming government banning many computer games, EA will team up with an Australian developer to produce 'culturally sensitive' games that are geared more towards Chinese society and moral values, while the French company intend to open an office in Beijing. Much like the huge tobacco corporations they see the East as a juicy, untapped market full of fresh and uncynical consumers, although an uncharacteristically politicised STATION feels the fascist horrors of Tianemen Square have been too readily forgotten by greedy western companies.

METAL GEAR MADNESS

One not at all surprising piece of news is that *Metal Gear Solid* broke all existing PlayStation sales records. Even *The Observer* admitted that *Metal Gear Solid* deserved the hype. So it wasn't exactly a revelation that in the UK alone the title grossed £3.3m of sales in its first week, outshining the previous record holder, *Resident Evil 2* by nearly 11,000 units to achieve the second best sales figure for a seven day period. Although N64 title *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* remains the fastest selling computer game ever, selling 110,000 units in its first week, this was launched in the middle of the Christmas rush, and long term sales may yet hold more newsworthy praise for *MGS*. Importantly the supply problems that plagued *Zelda* didn't hamper the title at all, the launch running incredibly smoothly for such a big game.



BETA ZONE

TITLE: DINO CRISIS
PUBLISHER: TBA
RELEASE: WINTER

The guru behind *Resident Evil* is forgoing work on the third instalment of the survival horror classic in favour of spending more time on the creation of Dino Crisis. Following the same game style as the *Evil* titles, Dino Crisis sees you on a deserted island inhabited by carnivorous dinosaurs that have missed lunch, placing you on the menu. Expect plenty of *Jurassic Park*-homage shock moments and some frantic combat action when this title finally sees the light of day.

iNFO STATION

Out Of PocketStation

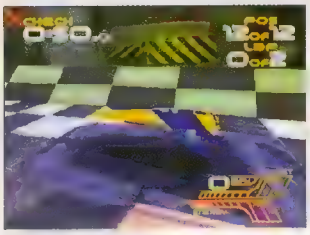
The long awaited PocketStation add-on has been delayed once again, probably due to the incredible demand for them in Japan. The handheld unit will fit into the front of the PlayStation and allow the user to download games. Expect it now in September.

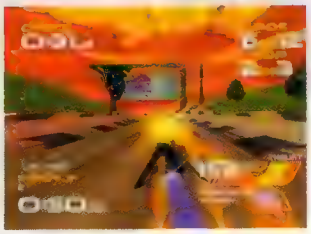
More Pocket Palm Power

In a quest to penetrate the handheld gaming market still dominated by the simplistic yet colossal Game Boy, SNK are set to release a colour Neo Geo Pocket in the UK. The machine is due for an imminent American release with ten launch titles.

Spawny Cash–In

Pity the characters of *Street Fighter*. They never get any peace, now they face Spawn. Yes, *Street Fighter Vs Spawn* is the latest planned incarnation in the range. Capcom have remained tight lipped about plans for *Street Fighter Vs Apathetic Backbench MPs*.





HIGH SPEED HANDBAG

Psygnosis have announced that their forthcoming make-or-break sequel *WipEout 3* will have a 'musical director' masterminding the game's all-important soundtrack, namely housewives' favourite mainstream DJ, Sasha. Whereas the previous two titles boasted avant-garde UK tracks from the likes of Photek, Future Sound of London and Orbital, the new racer will see the über-disc jockey penning exclusive tunes plus working with several international guest acts, which according to the press release will worryingly provide 'a smoother, progressive mix' in place of the gritty cutting edge music seen before. Let's just hope the game isn't over before the ten-minute intros finish... Other new features in *WipEout 3* include a split screen option, Tournament and Death Match modes, Dual Shock compatibility (obviously), seven new weapons plus five classic armaments, three fresh teams and an Improved Progression system that 'allows greater accessibility to make newcomers feel right at home', the wimps.

wipeout

NEWS NIPPON

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM WAY OUT EAST

TEKKEN THINGS FURTHER

There are things many would change in *Tekken 3*, despite its encompassing brilliance. Namco have listened to the collective voice of the gaming masses and are working on an upgrade of *Tekken 3*, unofficially referred to as *Tekken 3.5*, admittedly not the most enthralling choice of name you'll encounter. The improvements and modifications will include the mandatory better graphics and sound as well as the transition of secret characters from *Tekken 2* into the equation such as Roger and Alex. The game is expected to hit Japanese arcades in the summer and with any luck the PlayStation version will soon begin the development process. We'll keep you posted.

SPEED SEQUEL

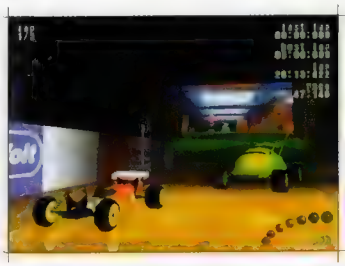
***Rollcage* is still molten-fresh on UK shelves and already STATION has heard reports that Psygnosis are tentatively working on a sequel. Details are as sparse as hairs on Kojak's head, but it is expected that some form of official announcement will be made at this year's E3 in May. Rumours about Rod, Jane and Freddy creating the in-game music are pure fiction and should be disregarded.**

TITLE: FIGHTER MAKER
PUBLISHER: AGETEC
RELEASE: OUT NOW (JAPAN)

Can you imagine *Tekken Lego*? Consider it a reality as Fighter Maker gives you the opportunity to create your own beat 'em-up character from scratch. The creation process is comprehensive, requiring you to oversee every iota of animation, attacks and sounds. You can even edit attack damage and camera angle, making this a dream package for the serious combat aficionado. The reward of pitting your own fighter against a friend should be worth the effort involved.

TITLE: RC RE–VOLT
PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
RELEASE: SUMMER

Assumedly following a similar ground-hugging path to *Stunt Copter*, this radio-controlled buggy game lets you drive over twenty dinky cars through a range of settings that include a museum, wild west, cruise ship, botanical garden and so on, plus a track editor so you can create your own massive jumps to hurl the car over, just like in real life. As we've had an influx of speedy RC cars recently in the office our appetite for this game has been sorely whetted.



Ups and Downs

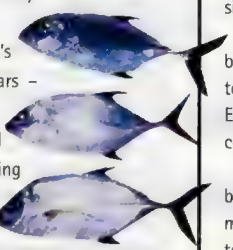
Here's an insight into the mind of STATION – some of this month's celebratory statements and groans of complaint.

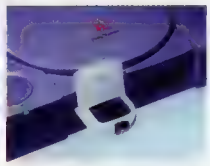
BONUS BEATS

- The genuinely staggering PlayStation 2 ushering in a new era of peace and love, probably.
- The Prodigy *Dirt Chamber Sessions* mix CD – all you prissy and bland house DJs take note, this is how it's meant to be done, suckas.
- *Syphon Filter* continuing to surprise us after a month's play – 'Don't shoot, I'm unarmed!'
- The *Metal Gear* action figures – 'I want Psycho Mantis, he's mine, MINE!'
- Jet Li as Boba Fett in *Star Wars: Episode 1*. Top casting!
- New blood on the mag in the form of Nick and Kendall – hungry young turks out to carve their names in magazine history.

BEATS US

- *Species II* – possibly the crappest movie sequel we have ever seen.
- The *Daily Mail* accusing Sony of trying to rip off the parents of demanding kiddies by bringing out the PSX 2 – shove a sock in it you reactionary Nazi scumbags.
- The repercussions of Melville's departure still ringing in our ears – sorry Amy C.
- The bizarre rumour going round the industry that Darren is quitting and opening up a fishing tackle shop, of all things. Eh? What?





CODIES ON THE BALL

No stranger to the creation of genre-defining titles, Codemasters has liaised with the League Managers Association for its next title, a football management game. Unlike all other football management simulations that have graced the field before, the Codemasters title proudly boasts the fact that it will be one of the first European developed games to feature gameplay extensions utilising the PocketStation, allowing players to continue matches away from their PlayStation and indulge in head-to-head conflict via the infra-red connection. Thankfully, there is no virtual pet element involved. Football magnates associated with the League Managers Association include Alex Ferguson and Tottenham director of football, David Pleat, ensuring this will be a simulation with feet firmly planted in realism. The game will carry a simple and effective interface, being icon based and 'intuitive', without reams of text to have to wade through. John Barnwell, Chief Executive of the League Managers Association, commented: '...this is a fantastic concept and quite brilliantly executed... We are absolutely delighted to be connected with it'. Praise like that is certain to make punters prick up their ears, so keep them pointed towards us for the latest.

DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS?

Activision and high street fashion chain Top Shop are teaming up to promote games in clothes stores. Kicking off with titles like *T'ai Fu* and the next batch of *Star Wars* games, Activision has installed game pods in the girlies' favourite flagship store on Oxford Street, with plans to tour the scheme around the country. The pods are designed to allow people to try out the games before purchase, and will also aid game launches and host special events and competitions. A cunning plan which should really have been thought of before, the targets of this marketing oddity are men waiting for girlfriends in changing rooms. Whilst ideologically a little unsound, it smacks of brilliance to all those who have suffered at the hands of their partners the trial of standing around not looking bored but not looking interested either...

RED LEMON STORM RISING

Red Storm Entertainment (part owned by techno-thriller author Tom Clancy, trivia fans) has bought the publishing rights to one of the longest-delayed PlayStation games ever, *Aironauts*. Developed by Scottish coder Red Lemon, its closest analogy is to a tooled-up *Pilotwings*, and was impressive even a year ago when Dazza saw a sneak preview of it in construction. Preview code is winging its way down from Glasgow so tune in to issue 9 for a full and frank preview.

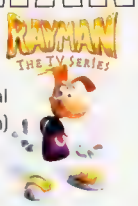
TITLE: EVIL ZONE
PUBLISHER: TITUS
RELEASE: JUNE

The highly successful beat 'em-up *Eretzvaju* arrives on these shores with the more anglo-friendly moniker Evil Zone. The game offers a new slant on the fighting genre, being firmly based in the world of anime, which means bright colours, lots of action and characters that will include deceptively sweet looking schoolgirls with big eyes and psychotic tendencies. The game will include five male fighters and five female, as well as five different playing modes. Battle is due to commence in June.

TITLE: THE NEXT TETRIS
PUBLISHER: HASBRO
RELEASE: SUMMER

It's been around the 'block' a few times, but there's still been no puzzle game to topple it. The Next Tetris is the decade-late sequel to everyone's favourite (nay only?) Game Boy cart, and will retain the sparse 2D form of before but introduce demi-coloured blocks that split along lines of hue if there is spare space beneath. This forehead-smackingly simple feature adds an entire new level of problem solving, along with a two player mode (getting a line spins your opponent's playing field) and a Marathon mode.

CATHODE RAYMAN



Mildly popular Ubi Soft character Rayman is going to get his own animated TV series it seems. Using CGI graphics, it stars the invisible-armed bloke and his group of loyal but mismatched friends on the run (for some as yet unclear reason) from the Law in the form of Sergeant Grub. Thirteen half-hour episodes have been made which will probably only get shown on CITV we'd imagine.

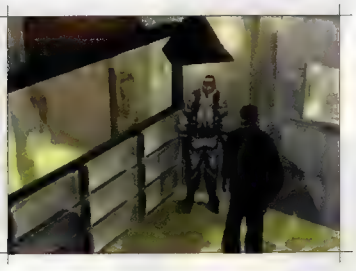
THE FORCE IN YOUR HAND

Keep this quiet, like, but I'll let you into a secret. It's real hush hush, and I'm only tellin' you, alright? Word on the street is that there's gonna be a new *Star Wars* flick soon, *The Phantom Menace*. You already knew that? Well, you bloody well should as this is the hottest thing around since the Human Torch ate a vindaloo. The simple act of purely viewing a film is passé these days. Consumers want to interact with the media, so what better manner to do so than with tie-in games, based upon the film? In fact, two very different incarnations exist, both scheduled for PlayStation release. The first game is a

3D arcade adventure, with the player controlling, for the majority of the game, the Jedi knights Qui-Gon Jinn and the sprightly Obi-Wan Kenobi. Paralells to *Tomb Raider* cannot be ignored, but are not entirely accurate. The second game is, curiously, a racer, inspired by the sequence in the film in which Pod racing takes place on Tatooine. Playing in a similar manner to a grand prix, the player must win races to procure sufficient funds to customise your racer. Boasting realistic handling physics and big boss characters, this should be 'impressive', as Darth might have said. We must stress that the given screenshots are from pre-release PC versions of the games and may in no way reflect the PlayStation version, but quite frankly we don't care.

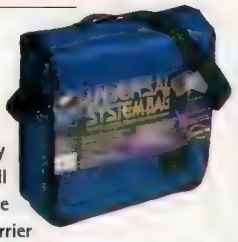
TITLE: MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
RELEASE: LATE SUMMER

To tie in with the original movie and its forthcoming sequel comes this adventure title which will allow you to step into the shoes of a nicely pixellated Tom Cruise and save the world from evil. Expect action and tension as the on-screen fuse burns ever shorter and you head ever closer to the infamous self destruct. Your mission, should you wish to accept it, will begin later in the year, and of course all developments will be covered by the STATION team.



TECH BITS

UNIVERSAL SYSTEM BAG



PRODUCED BY: Gamester
PRICE: £14.99
RATING: The Prada of console carriage.

There are some people out there that seem to enjoy slogging their precious PlayStation from A to B, all for a few hours of multiplayer pleasure. All those wasted moments of confused wires and dirty carrier bags are over with the Gamester bag. Ideally designed for conveying the grey wonder, it has a separate pouch within the bag specifically designed to keep the console safe. A further dividing section lets you keep games and peripherals apart. It's a sturdy bag and not at all embarrassing in a cool shock blue, ideal for the groceries as well as the console.

DUAL FORCE RACING WHEEL

PRODUCED BY: Mad Catz
PRICE: £59.99
RATING: Game over, man!

This wheel is endorsed by Mario Andretti, elderly racing veteran. Was it due to the ergonomic wheel design or a hefty wad of used notes? Unlike the V3, the wheel remains static, so you have to adapt to it and not make it adapt to your tastes. The wheel itself is sturdy enough but the pedals can sometimes be too rigid, making for inaccuracy with acceleration and braking. Vital elements in racing games, y'know. The gearstick on the wheel body is a nice touch, let down by the fact that the wheel itself resembles a pretzel and can be slightly cumbersome due to this fact.

ASSASSIN AUTOMATIC HANDGUN

PRODUCED BY: Nu-Gen
PRICE: £39.99
RATING: Sleek, accurate and Pulp Fiction suave.

This gun looks efficient, gangsta cool, a machine of execution used by antinomian killers such as Leon or Mr Blonde. Point this baby at the screen and you ARE Deckard, retiring replicants. Being G-Con compatible, it's cross-compatible with most light gun games. The buttons are placed so as to be easy to grasp and simple to access in the heat of mercenary gunslinging action. Not only that, but it boasts a sliding bolt when firing, highlighting the authentic experience. Just don't blame us when you start yelling 'cogsugga!' at the screen. A choice light gun.

V3 RACING WHEEL

PRODUCED BY: InterAct
PRICE: £49.99
RATING: One smart package.

Not many arcade racing wheels can boast an 'adjustable tilt angle', but the diverse V3 wheel can. The angle, and indeed the length of the steering column, can be adjusted to suit all tastes and heights. The pedals are sufficiently weighty and balanced so as to be easy to use in lap time frenzy and the wheel itself fits snugly under the legs for tighter control. The intuitive design means that the buttons are easy to reach too.

PLUSH HOUR

With the global success of *Crash Bandicoot 3* and *Spyro the Dragon* reaching new heights, it was inevitable a range of cash-raking tie-in merchandising would appear based on the likeable cutey-poo characters. Spyro will be featured on cuddly toys, LCD handheld games, pyjamas and bizarrely enough, boxer shorts. The boy Crash gets a complete range of toys, accessories, collectibles, apparel and stationery. Both are apparently also being considered for home furnishing products and 'giftware' licensing, in what form we know not. Spyro sofas? Crash mats? It could happen...

FEELING THIRSTY?

As if Pepsi didn't reap enough profit from image conscious individuals, they want to further their market dominance by diversifying to the field of games. Which is fine as long as they don't rope in the Spice Girls for an advertising campaign. The game, *Pepsiman*, features the eponymous and blatantly branded hero saving thirsty consumers, although why is a mystery. Pepsiman shuns violence, instead preferring to materialise Pepsi products out of thin air. If somebody dressed in a Pepsi suit materialised cans from his anatomy near me, I'd call the authorities. The game itself is reminiscent of *Crash Bandicoot*, with Pepsiman platforming himself into a fizz. It may be the choice for a new generation or perhaps just for a few Japanese obsessives, but all this blatant advertising really makes me urge for a Dr Pepper.

KANGAROO POO COMPETITION WINNERS

HELEN NOBLE, LANCS • W BARRETT, W YORKS • W HORREX, SUFFOLK • LJ PHILLIPSON, SUTTON • NICK MOTLEY, DEESIDE • ALLYSON HENRY, AYLESBURY • JAD DESMIER, EXETER • MARIA CONTRERAS, BETWS-Y-COED • SHAUN PALMER, CARDENDEN • ELDON O'MAHONY, CORK • KEVIN NEWTON, KING'S LYNN • MICHEAL HILLIER, BICESTER • MARK VENNING, READING • REBECCA DIBBEN, WIMBORNE • MAGGIE LEE, ABERDEEN • JAMES SCULLION, WILTS • LOUISE DEELEY, CARDIFF • SARAH MOUNTAIN, LINCOLNSHIRE • G WELLS, BEDFORD • J FEATHERSTONE, LONDON

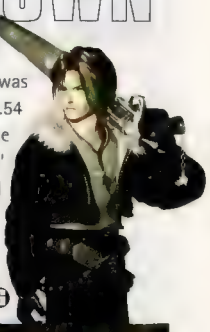
IS IT REAL OR IS IT A LIGHTGUN WINNERS

ASHLEY WHEELER, BISHOPS STORTFORD • MRS A KITSON, LONDON • DAVID ABLETT, NORTHANTS • ALEX WONG, BRISTOL • TOBY KING, NEWPORT PAGNELL • A BARRETT, LONDON • JARRAD AHMAD, MANCHESTER • CHRIS MEAKIN, WEST MIDLANDS • PAUL BRANT, MOSELEY • LUCAS JOHNSON, SOUTHAMPTON • CARL SNOWBALL, WASHINGTON

MAX POWER WINNERS

G DAVIES, SALISBURY • MICHAEL HARTLEY, BRISTOL

THE CHIPS ARE DOWN



Squaresoft has apparently invented an import-proof technology for their forthcoming *Final Fantasy VIII*, which was released in February in Japan, notching up a staggering 2.54 million units in four days. The theory is that the coding within the game ensures that it will only run on Japanese PlayStations and not 'chipped' UK or American PlayStations. Simon Etchells of Square Europe claimed 'We think that this is the most sophisticated anti-piracy software introduced so far'. However, our sources inform us that this is not quite the truth as copies of *Final Fantasy VIII* have been reputed to work on chipped PlayStations in the UK a mere days after its Oriental release.

ONE'S FORMULA THREE'S A CROWD

In a move likely to cause even further consternation at Psygnosis, EA have announced they too will have an officially licensed Formula One game, adding to the already existing *F1* titles and Eidos' upcoming sim, which also boasts an official licence (see below). Considering the generally lacklustre nature of EA's racing titles (*NASCAR '99* anyone?) you'll understand that this prospect hardly fills us with anticipatory joy. By the way we'd like to clarify that Eidos' own F1 title (now named *Official Formula 1 Racing*) that's being developed as you read this is NOT a conversion of the Nintendo *F1 World Grand Prix* in any way (as accidentally inferred in issue 6) but a completely new game written from the ground up. STATION can also exclusively reveal that it will feature bang-up-to-date 1999 stats and teams (including the hideous two-colour BAR cars), putting it at direct loggerheads with *F1 '99*, when it arrives. It's all bound to get a bit ugly, we reckon.

LARA LINGERS LONGER

Games, merchandise, films and somewhat revealing internet pictures. All testify to the greatness of one Lara Croft; media icon and sex-symbol. Eidos have recently let slip that a further *Tomb Raider* game (let me guess; *Tomb Raider IV*, perchance?) is planned for 1999. At the moment, details are tenuous at best, leaving speculation that it may be a movie tie-in. Further rumours are also circulating that Core Design will be one of the first to receive a PlayStation 2 development kit, opening up the possibility of a version for both PlayStation consoles. Whatever transpires, trust us to keep our finger on the pulse and give you the verdict as soon as we can dig it out.

AIRONAUTS

EYE CANDY

Those Magnificent Men

Following in the footsteps of famous Greek jail breakers Icarus and Daedalus, this cheery fellow is one of a cast of characters soon to be appearing in *Aironauts*, likewise hoping to make good his escape from incarceration. See page 102 for more details!

NO MORE POLYGONS

Late twentieth century life demands us to be awash in a sea of raw, unrefined information virtually every day of our lives. No longer can we rely on patriarchal master narratives to tell us what is good and right in the ever-widening chasm that is human culture. We at STATION, however, will be your willing and eclectic pathfinders through this aesthetic chaos, dividing the wheat of cool from the chaff of naff, and in turn making the world a more enlightened and groovy place to exist in.

ALBUMS

TITLE: WORMHOLE
ARTIST: Ed Rush and Optical
LABEL: Virus **PRICE:** £15.99
RELEASED: Out now

With much of jungle treading the same inevitable paths it traditionally falls to the daring auteurs of the scene to push the envelope, and the streamlined partnership of Ed Rush and Optical has accordingly come up up with a classic tune every couple of months without fail. Now this album takes their patented neurofunk sound and expands it through ten iterations, each track showing an obvious trademark style but avoiding the overly grim distortions and metal fatigued sonic themes that have dogged the majority of techstep. Whipcrack rhythms and acid-scoured textures proliferate, with an inevitable underpinning of lithe infra-red bass ensuring the music has as much context for solo home listening as fuel for slamdancing. Unfortunately the intriguing darkside hip hop-based tunes that the pair are capable of (as seen on the gargantuan *Metalheads* box set of last year) don't make an appearance, leaving the album stuck in a thrilling but demanding high gear that necessitates it be absorbed in bursts rather than as a cogent whole. Nevertheless it's a muscular but subtle experience that combines dancefloor workout with mind-melding spectral awareness.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

TITLE: PEASANTS, PIGS & ASTRONAUTS
ARTIST: Kula Shaker
LABEL: Columbia **PRICE:** £12.99
RELEASED: Out now

Crispian Mills and his wacky band of space cadets return, after the success of debut album *K*, and once again they are partying like it is 1969. The comeback single 'The Sound Of Drums' was tiresome and cliched and did not bode well for this second album. I am glad to report that this is in fact one of the few weak tracks on an otherwise competent release. The music remains overblown and pretentious with every strange instrument under the sun being brought in to increase the bombastic nature of the hippy vibe and everything about the recording sounds incredibly dated, as if the album were just discovered in a dusty trunk in the attic. But whilst the lyrics will say nothing to you about your life or indeed the life of anyone facing the next millenium (they are in short absolute nonsense, but this will come as no surprise to fans of the first album) the power of songs such as 'Mystical Machine Gun' cannot be denied and the whole package if not analysed too deeply or taken too seriously is relatively inoffensive and listenable. Kula Shaker – they won't change your world, but if you've got the time, this record is worth a few plays.

RATING: ✪✪✪

TITLE: PERFORMANCE & COCKTAILS
ARTIST: Stereophonics
LABEL: V2 **PRICE:** £12.99
RELEASED: Out now

Welsh trio Stereophonics return with their second album, destined to hit the number one spot, following an extremely successful year, the high point of which was a homecoming gig at Cardiff Castle in front of 10,000 people, where most of this album was previewed. The energy of tracks such as 'The Bartender And The Thief' is balanced with heartfelt slower songs, the best of which being 'She Takes Her Clothes Off', the tragic tale of an ageing stripper. Lyrically Kelly Jones is an excellent storyteller and his voice bleeds with emotion. Fans of their debut album *Word Gets Around* will not be disappointed and Stereophonics can expect to see their fanbase swell with this impressive release.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

TITLE: 13
ARTIST: Blur
LABEL: Food **PRICE:** £12.99
RELEASED: Out now

The cockney barrow boy antics of *Parklife* are not to be found on this mournful new release from one of Britain's biggest bands. Guitarist Graham Coxon instead takes his sonic cues from American underground heroes such as Pavement and Mercury Rev, whilst lyrically Damon Albarn documents his split from long-term girlfriend, Justine Frischmann, lead singer of Britpop sensations Elastica. Coxon works his guitar into a frenzy on high octane thrills such as 'B.L.U.R.E.M.I' and also sings on the high point of the album, the wistful and sweet 'Coffee And TV'. The most beautiful moment comes with the penultimate track 'No Distance Left To Run', Albarn's most honest open letter to his lost love.

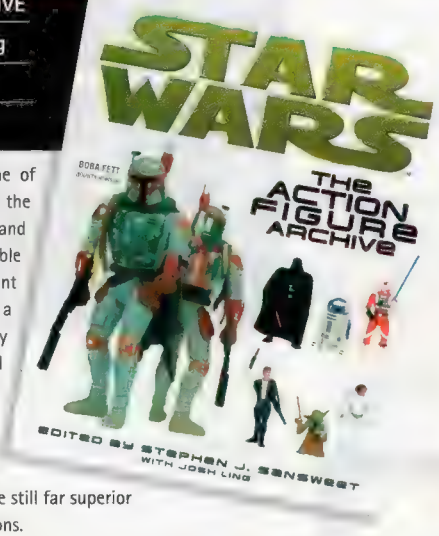
13 is both refreshing and adventurous. Essential.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪✪

ALBUM REVIEWS: (106) WORMHOLE – ED RUSH & OPTICAL (106) PERFORMANCE & COCKTAILS – STEREOPHONICS (106) 13 – BLUR (106) PEASANTS, PIGS & ASTRONAUTS – KULA SHAKER BOOK REVIEW: (107) STAR WARS ACTION FIGURINE ARCHIVE – VIRGIN (107) THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK – VIRGIN LIVE MUSIC REVIEW: (108) ORBITAL – EXETER UNIVERSITY SITE OF THE MONTH: (108) BERT IS EVIL TOY REVIEWS: (108) BEATMANIA HANDHELD (108) VARIOUS ACTION FIGURES DVD REVIEWS: (109) COPLAND – BUENA VISTA DVD (109) LETHAL WEAPON 4 – WARNER BROS DVD (109) JACKIE CHAN: MY STORY – HONG KONG CLASSICS (109) GODZILLA – COLUMBIA DVD FOOD OF THE MONTH: (109) CADBURY'S CRUNCHY EXPLOSION

BOOKS

TITLE: STAR WARS ACTION FIGURINE ARCHIVE
EDITOR: Stephen J. Sansweet with Josh Ling
FORMAT: Hardback **PUBLISHED BY:** Virgin
PRICE: £25 **RELEASED:** Out now



What with the impending cultural milestone of *Episode 1* and the recent Special Editions, the popularity of *Star Wars* figures both new and old-school is going through something of an inevitable resurgence, with silly money often being paid for mint condition characters and accessories. This book is a glossy hardbacked round up of every *Star Wars* toy produced ever, including limited edition figures and special offer toys never generally released. Packed with hundreds of painstakingly compiled photographs it's been passed around the office gleefully since we got a copy, but one thing it does prove conclusively is that the original figures we all coveted in our youth are still far superior to the deformed and over-muscular modern incarnations.

▲ If you own one of the original AT-ATs, and it's still in mint condition and boxed, it's probably worth a few bob.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪✪

TITLE: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
EDITORS: Leigh Brackett & Lawrence Kasdan
FORMAT: Hardback **PUBLISHED BY:** Virgin
PRICE: £16.99 **RELEASED:** Out now

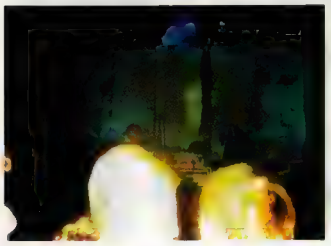
Three little movies, one huge legend. The *Star Wars* phenomenon has lasted through the seventies, eighties and nineties and with the future release of *Episode One: The Phantom Menace*, our Rebel heroes will stay in our thoughts long into the next millenium. This welcome hardback edition contains the complete and unedited script to *The Empire Strikes Back*, which most *Star Wars* trainspotters will tell you was the superior movie of the original trilogy. The text is beautifully presented over one hundred and sixty lavish pages, and each is graced by at least four pictures of the cinematic action. For the hardcore fan, or the first time reader, this is a satisfying addition to any movie literature library.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

LIVE MUSIC

ARTIST: ORBITAL
DATE: 14th March
VENUE: Exeter University, Great Hall

Being responsible for the Greatest Gig Ever (© Glastonbury 1994) must make playing live for Orbital a touch demanding, particularly as this first date of Paul and Phil Hartnoll's tour to support their *Middle of Nowhere* album took place in spite of their sequencer's hard drive crashing less than a week beforehand, unceremoniously dumping a month's meticulous preparation. Nonetheless, the brothers soldiered through the technical itches and scrappy acoustics of the venue to showcase a large selection of brand spanking new tunes on a crowd that unfortunately in the main had to go to work the next day. Some phases of the music did admittedly fall a touch flat thanks to unfamiliarity and rough structuring. A compulsion for obvious crowd pleasers ('Impact', an encored 'Satan') also dulled the sense of adventure a little, but the consensus among the STATION cognoscenti was that it boded well for the new LP, particularly when bearing in mind the vintage bagpipe/Stone Roses crossover single, 'Style'.



RATING: ✪✪✪✪

SITE OF THE MONTH

SITE: BERT IS EVIL
ADDRESS: http://fractalcow.com/bert/

This site is dedicated to uncovering the true and wicked nature of Bert from *Sesame Street* to an unsuspecting world. Photographic evidence shows Bert in compromising sexual situations with both Pamela Anderson and Ernie, participating in KKK rituals, smoking marijuana, appearing on *Jerry Springer*, fraternising with Hitler at the Nuremberg rallies and lurking suspiciously in the crowd at the assassination of JFK. Obviously the work of dedicated lovers of freedom, we can only wait and see what dirt they dig up on Mr Snuffalufagus.

▲ Sure to give the kids a complex, the muppets as you've never seen them before.

RATING: ✪✪✪

TOYS

NAME: BEATMANIA HANDHELD
PRODUCED BY: Konami **RELEASED:** Import
PRICE: Call Project K (0181 508 1328)

Beatmania is a Japanese phenomenon, a music simulator where you must press the buttons in a particular order, and with exact timing, to create tunes. As it continues to enthral everyone, the dedicated player is left with one problem, what to do when you are out and about and fancy a game. The answer – Beatmania for the pocket.

As a conversion it compares favourably, keeping the same control system, right down to the mini turntable for adding scratches to your tracks. Gameplay is difficult, but highly addictive and the only thing missing is a save feature to continue your DJ progress. Nine different tunes are available ranging from hip hop to ska and all in all it is a quirky delight, offering hours of poptastic fun for wannabe Oakenfolds everywhere.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

NAME: ACTION FIGURES (VARIOUS)
PRODUCED BY: Todd McFarlane
PRICE: Various **RELEASED:** Out now

In a similar vein to the recently available *Metal Gear Solid* action figures, come brand new likenesses of Kiss, by Todd McFarlane of *Spawn* fame, created to tie in with the make-up wearing ageing rockers new reunion album *Psycho Circus* and the world tour which accompanies it. The sculpting of Paul, Gene, Peter and Ace is excellent and fans will lap up the chance to have the greatest rock and roll band in the world in their collections.

Also new from McFarlane are a selection of memorable movie maniacs brilliantly recreated in all their gory detail. Characters so far available are Patrick and Eve of *Species 2*, Leatherface from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the demonic Freddie Krueger from the *Nightmare On Elm Street* series and my own personal favourite psychopath, *Friday The 13th*'s Jason Voorhees. A must for horror fans.

RATING: ✪✪✪

DVD

TITLE: COP LAND
DISTRIBUTOR: BUENA VISTA DVD
PRICE: £15.99

Something of a revelation, Cop Land's ensemble cast of Hollywood's finest (De Niro, Keitel and Liotta) and their usual trademark fine performances are diminished by the sympathetic and brave lead, Sylvester Stallone. This gently paced thriller finds Stallone playing an over-weight, hearing-impaired town sheriff taking on the might of a corrupt city police force. As expected, the acting duties are handled with almost flawless ease, complementing the strong character driven narrative. Yet Stallone's low key performance is quite magnificent, shrugging off the tired *Rambo* mantle, with the on-screen violence kept to a minimum until the explosive finale. A riveting character study, which holds the interest long after the final credits have rolled. One complaint through and one that is commonplace with Buena Vista DVD packages, although the print quality is stunning why no extras?

RATING: ✪✪✪✪✪

TITLE: LETHAL WEAPON 4
DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS DVD
PRICE: £15.99

After a strong start and an equally enjoyable sequel, the *Lethal Weapon* series began to rapidly weaken. Whilst mildly diverting, the third instalment appeared to have lost the psychotic edge of its predecessors. Sadly the fourth, and please Lord, final entry is little more than an average popcorn epic, worthy only of a begrudged sitting on a wet afternoon. Gibson and Glover return in their respective roles, yet the soap opera style script provides only paper-thin copies of these once endearing characters. Even the presence of the awe-inspiring martial artist, Jet Li, does little rise the flagging sprits of the viewer. Running to a strictly by the numbers formula, I was left to ponder just for how much longer will audiences tolerate such dross. Even the rather nasty climactic battle is drowned in the slush of the candy-coated ending. Thankfully the disc is packed with a huge array of extra features, including deleted scenes from the three previous movies, making the package a little more palatable.

RATING: ✪✪

TITLE: JACKIE CHAN: MY STORY
DISTRIBUTOR: HONG KONG CLASSICS
PRICE: £12.99

When I grow up I want to be Jackie Chan. The ultimate action hero, Chan's career has spanned over 30 years and in excess of 50 movies, and his meteoric rise to the top is detailed in the officially endorsed video biography, Jackie Chan: My Story, a fascinating insight into the man behind the screen persona. Although the glossy presentation and cheap TV style links are a little distracting and one feels that the numerous interviews could have been far more probing, one cannot help but become intrigued.

Clearly a must for fans, there is enough action, failed stunts and humorous out-takes to keep the uninitiated amused too. Obviously produced with the audience's entertainment in mind, the makers have managed to produce a documentary that is both informative and entertaining without falling into the soft focus, unbalanced approach is usually associated with such material. Chan is the man, simple as that, making this release a refreshing change to any action movie fan's diet.

RATING: ✪✪✪

TITLE: GODZILLA
DISTRIBUTOR: COLUMBIA DVD
PRICE: £19.99

Not nearly as awful as its reputation may suggest, Roland (*Independence Day*) Emmerich's Hollywood spawning of Japan's favourite giant lizard is a shallow, flashy, poorly scripted, piece of crap, but crap of the highest order never the less. Godzilla is quite possibly the perfect junk movie.

Somehow more enjoyable on the small screen, allowing the viewer to relish in the power of the fast forward button makes the bits between the parts where the cgi generated monster goes ape that bit more bearable. Lacking the charm of the Japanese bloke in rubber suit epics, this remake isn't completely without merit, the awful performances of the cast, with the exception of the charismatic Jean Reno, provide some unintentional laughs and the huge plot holes are also fun to spot. The excellent special FX can't mask the fact that this is a truly bad film but it is one that is all the more fun because all involved realise this is the case. The disc's clean print is complemented by a pile of extras, making this highly recommended stuff.

RATING: ✪✪✪✪

FOOD OF THE MONTH

NAME: CRUNCHIE EXPLOSION
MANUFACTURER: CADBURY'S
PRICE: £0.34 (approx.)

It's an exciting and innovative time for chocalate bars as we near the millenium, with daring juxtapositions and eclectisism the palette-gladenning keynotes. Recent months have seen the ascendance of such inspired beauties as the Wispa Mint and Orange Kit-Kat wheedle their way into the notoriously consertative sweety mainstream, egged on by the likes of the multi-faceted Fuse bar and versatile Maverick. Now with the Crunchie Explosion we see a combination of two old-skool influences into a single Frankenstein food, namely the stalwart sticky-toothed bar and that sugary playground favourite, popping candy. It's certainly an eye-opening experience, as the familiar cocoa flavour is suddenly ripped asunder by tiny explosions in your gullet, and may be viewed by some as a crass perversion of a reliable old friend. Flashy yet stimulating, this could become a confectionary thrill-seeker's favourite.

RATING: ✪✪✪

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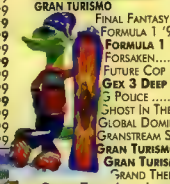

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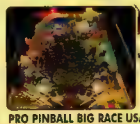
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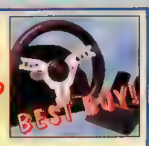

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Inside

PlayStation business news for the more discerning gamer

Inside Index: [page 112] Virgin merge with Interplay – Freeserve floated – Game in talks [page 113] AGETEC formed – Gremlin grabbed – PlayStation tops 4m mark in UK – Eidos not for sale

Virgin And Interplay Combine Forces

A deal has been confirmed which sees Virgin Interactive take control of all Interplay titles throughout Europe.

In a move which should realise sales of almost $160m next year, Virgin Interactive have boosted their portfolio by joining with Interplay. Some 23 Interplay staff will become Virgin employees, with around 10 remaining to manage the OEM division. Their Marlow offices will however close down shortly.

The deal is very much beneficial to both sides, providing Interplay with better distribution in Europe, and likewise for Virgin in the United States.

Floating Free

More news from Dixons this month as broad hints are dropped that they may float their free-access internet arm on the stock exchange.

Dixons chief exec, John Clare, has told the *Financial Times* that his company may, in the future, launch Freeserve onto the stock market. Freeserve has become, in the seven months since its launch, Britains largest internet provider, with over a million registered users. It has also spawned a number of imitation brands offfering similar services. The latest to throw their hats into the free access ring are BT and Virgin.

Game Talking

Electronics Boutique have opened negotiations to purchase rival retail outfit Game.

EB and Game have begun talks to create a UK retail superpower that could eclipse even the mighty Dixons and @jakarta in the games market. The news followed speculation, instantly denied, that Dixons themselves were interested in purchasing Game.

Both sides in the present discussions have played down the news, but industry pundits are suggesting that any offer would have to top Games market value of £148 million. Between the two chains there is a total of 243 stores. EB currently run 158 outlets to Game's 84.

While talks are still in a very early stage, shares in Game rose from the criminally undervalued 102p to 130p in one day, prompting the revelations about the possible merger. EB soon confirmed its interest provided the deal was in its own shareholders interests.

ELSPA Reacts To Action Replay Imposter

As reported in previous issues of STATION, a cheat card which effectively chips the PlayStation has been under scrutiny by the authorities.

The European leisure software body, ELSPA, has outlawed the Action Replay Smart Version, a cheat card which overides the security protection and effectively 'chips' the PlayStation. The card is under fire on two counts. Firstly the manufacturers are being sued by Datel for copyright infringement because the name and external design of the new cartridge are rather too similar to their own Action Replay cart; and secondly because they allow gamers to play pirate and imported games without tampering with their 'Stations and invalidating warranties.

While ELSPA has declared the products illegal and vowed to crack down on both producers and suppliers of the box, Sony themselves are still undecided about what action to take and were unable to comment at the time of going to press. When their course of action is decided, it will likely be swift, although doubtless they are treading carefully after the recent failure to block sales of the Virtual Game Station – Connectix' Mac application which emulates PlayStation technology.

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